

# Backstreets

The Boss Magazine

#82 SPRING 2005  
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THE JOHN FOGERTY INTERVIEW

## STORY TELLER

Springsteen the  
Raconteur is Back  
for Devils & Dust

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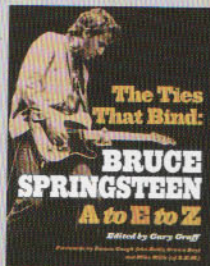


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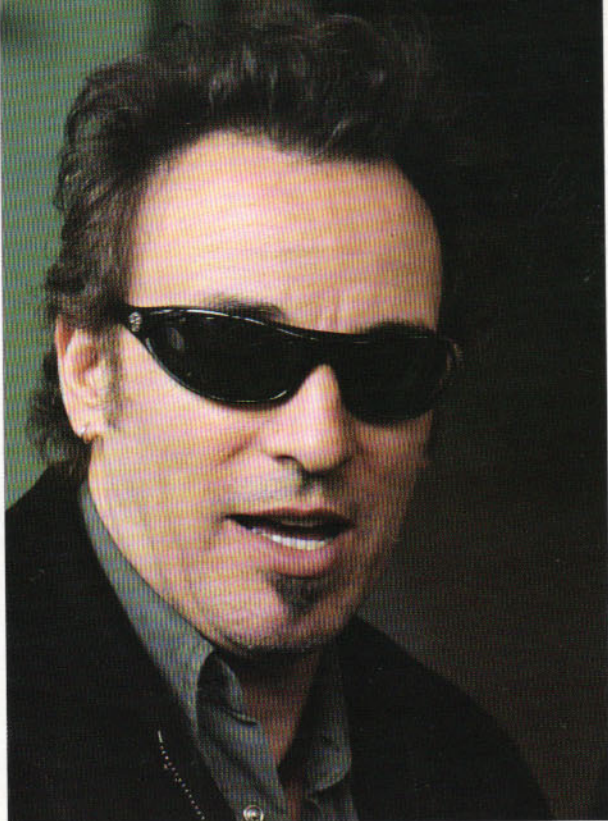
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"These are just my rehearsal shades."

Outside the Paramount Theatre, Asbury Park, NJ, April 22, 2005.

# Backstreets

THE BOSS MAGAZINE SINCE 1980

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### HEY MR. DEEJAY!

"Last night a DJ saved my life," as the song goes. And in the '70s, a number of passionate radio tastemakers helped save the career of Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band. Decades down the road, Litte Steven returns the favor by helping to preserve the form. Here we pay tribute to the Boss Jocks and wrap it all up by talking with the Coolest Little DJ in the U.S.A. . . . **32**

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Anton Corbijn Photo

### JOHN FOGERTY

Courtesy of Bob Fogerty

## OFF THE WALL

### BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

April 4, 2005 • Kevin Mazur/Wireimage Photo



# LETTERS

## NO MORE MR. NICE GUY

Dear Editor:

I was lucky enough to attend the April 4 taping of Springsteen's appearance on *VH1's Storytellers*, as a winner of an online contest they conducted in collaboration with *Backstreets*. I was informed that 7,500 people had responded, and I was one of 140 chosen. Of those, the VH1 producers selected 12 folks to ask questions at the end of the musical section of the taping. These questions had been first vetted by *Backstreets*, and then VH1 selected "the 12 most interesting" they had received. I was one of those people.

I was feeling pretty good at this point.

I've been a big fan of Springsteen's music for most of my life (although by comparison to some of the people I encountered in the parking lot outside the theater, maybe buying his records and attending his concerts does not qualify me as a "big fan." There were some odd people out there, Bruce—be careful!).

Once I got inside, I couldn't believe my good fortune. The performance was incredible, he really outdid himself. Then it came time to ask my question. I was nervous, and I began to realize that he had already answered my silly question during his introduction to "Brilliant Disguise." But I figured that this was the question VH1 wanted me to ask, so I better stick to "the script".

I ask away: "Bruce, over the years you have developed a reputation as rock 'n' roll's 'nice guy,' a 'real man of the people.' I could imagine this could become a burden...." Then I paused, for just a moment, for dramatic effect, before I got to the really funny part of the question—the part that I thought won me the ticket in—"I would think that you would want to 'go Johnny Rotten' once in a while, just to keep people on their toes." But before I got to that part, he replied quite quickly with, "I could come down there and slap you around if you want."

What is up with that? He spends 30 years building this "nice guy image" and he chooses this moment to throw it out the

window... and I'm the butt of the joke! Now, I am ruined. I will never live this down.

I slipped quietly back into my seat, then out the door and back to my car. All the time thinking, Bruce Springsteen just called me out in front of at least 300 people—and depending on the way the show is edited, possibly an international television viewing audience. Holy shit. As a 6'3", 260 lb., ex-offensive lineman who misspent the better part of his youth as a bouncer in Irish pubs along the Jersey shore, this kind of thing rarely happens to me—and never by an internationally renowned music icon who I have held in the highest esteem my entire life. Later I come to find out that I am the topic of conversation on radio shows and the internet. You can imagine my anguish; I was seriously considering donating all my Springsteen CDs to the local library, moving out of New Jersey, or maybe even voting Republican! (Don't worry, that is definitely not going to happen.)

Well, it's been a few days, and I've had some time to think it over. I guess it was a funny moment, and even if it isn't exactly the way that I had always envisioned meeting Bruce, at least I had the chance to; sort of.

I'm really only kidding, I had a wonderful time. I just wanted to drop a note and let you know that I do have a sense of humor. Thanks, Bruce, for the night in Red Bank that I will never live down, and for a lifetime of fantastic music.

Pat Beckett  
Haddon Heights, NJ

## KILLER

Dear Editor:

Just wanted to say that I have been reading *Backstreets* for a long time (subscriber since '85-ish) and #81 was by far your best issue. Congratulations from a less-than-sympathetic-to-the-cause fan. I must admit that the ad nauseum media coverage of Bruce did get to me those last few days—I even had the "shut up and sing" thought run through my head. But you guys made it clear, through your dead-on articles or insightful interviews, that this was Bruce's absolute right to stand up for what he believes in. I found myself wondering if

I would have the balls to do the same thing. You guys nailed it. Thank you for being true, and thanks for a terrific read. I'm pissed I finished it so fast.

Lynne Quinn  
via e-mail

## WELCOME TO MY NIGHTMARE

Dear Editor:

Never before this recent edition [#81] has my copy of *Backstreets* sat unopened for a week. Never before this latest edition has it taken me three minutes to read my copy of *Backstreets*. Never before this latest edition have I gagged upon looking at the "Off the Wall" photo. Here's hoping it never happens again.

Rich Desiderio  
via e-mail

## LOST IN AMERICA

Dear Editor:

I was really blown away by your editorial on *Backstreets'* coverage of the VFC tour and your experience covering Bruce during such a polarized and politically charged time in our country. I appreciated reading that because like any good Springsteen fan, Bruce's involvement with the Kerry campaign was, while not altogether surprising, still a shock for those of us who've watched him resist such urges in the past. Clearly, it was a divisive issue for all Springsteen patrons, regardless of devotion or fanaticism.

However, *Backstreets'* chronicles of the tour and Springsteen's appearances were objective and detailed, which honestly, is what any fan would have wanted. While I didn't necessarily support MoveOn's tactics or values, let alone every aspect of Bruce's message, like any fan I wanted to know what was going on, where he was playing, what he was saying, etc. Heck, I went to the NJ VFC show and heard what I believe may have been one of the tightest and powerful sets I've seen him perform out of the dozens of shows I've witnessed live. (It was also the show where I bought Keith Urban a beer after seeing him sit by himself along the floor waiting for Jackson Browne to come on stage... strange story.) Anyway, regardless of where the price of admis-

sion went, it was well worth it to hear the music, see the pairing with Fogerty, and be witness to a rare, even historical, event.

While my girlfriend refuses to see Springsteen again (a true NC Republican, she is) and my parents have officially condemned his music (again, stubborn Republicans—actually, I wish my Dad would have come to the same realization as yours), I can't not be upset by the fact that there are thousands of individuals who, because of political spite or partisan immaturity, will not allow themselves to take Springsteen or his music seriously again. This has really been on my mind a lot as I've been playing "Devils & Dust" on my iPod this week. It's a great song! And not only in that its themes, while relevant to the Iraq war, are universal. It's not a pro-Kerry song, nor is it an anti-Bush song, in my opinion (anti-war, perhaps). It is merely Springsteen telling a story, one that is dark and unflinchingly honest. Whether you've served in war or fear the mere thought of it, the struggles of the protagonist morph into our own by the end of the 4:57, and it presents a perspective and raises thoughts that most of us tend to lose in the media hype and news clips that have become so routine in our lives.

Anyway, I didn't mean to get into my thoughts on the new song, but I wanted to take the time and commend you on the piece and let you know it hit home in more ways than one.

Dante Cutrona  
via e-mail

## HEY STOOPID

Dear Editor:

On page 54 in issue #81, you write in the last paragraph "and former Smithereen Pat Dinizio." Pat is still very much a current member of The Smithereens, and the band has *not* broken up. You'll find their website at [www.officialsmithereens.com](http://www.officialsmithereens.com). The guys still record and tour regularly, although each has side projects.

Cindy Sivak  
via e-mail

## BILLION DOLLAR BABIES

Dear Editor:

All right, I like Bruce as much as the next guy, and I shelled



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out the dough to see the Shea Stadium shows at the end of the last tour. And yes, they were great. But \$85 for a solo show? Seeing that Cleveland sold out in ten minutes, I guess the public is buying it; but am I the only one saying "What!?" It's one thing for the Eagles to pull this kind of stuff, but enough's enough. Has this issue come up, or is everyone ignoring it?

Kurt Mulhauser  
 Akron, OH

## HELLO HOORAY

Dear Editor:

"Real World."  
 Solo piano.  
 Halleluiah!

Glen Gaston  
 Toronto, ON

## MUSCLE OF LOVE

Dear Editor:

I received the *Devils & Dust* album, and with great excitement I put it in my computer. My father, who I turned on to Bruce, said "Let's listen to it." I knew that "Reno" was the "naughty" song,

so I skipped it at that point, planning to come back later when my father wasn't listening, then I'd see what it was all about. We listened to each of the other songs. All was well in the world.

I read the lyrics in the booklet and was stunned at the adult nature of them. I quickly hoped that the music would suck so I could just skip that song. Man, the lyrics are bad. Later, I listened to the song and it is a very beautiful tune. Why did this happen?

I'm so disappointed in Bruce for creating something so filthy. Like I said, the music is beautiful. No question. But the x-rated lyrics are embarrassing.

Then I actually got pissed off at Bruce. Where is the classic Bruce subtlety? Where is the sense of decency? Has he traded both of those things for artistic license? Well, artistic license does not automatically make the art great. In fact, once an artist feels he has no one to answer to, his art can become offensive instead of entertaining or valuable.

Imagine Emeril making a culinary delicacy and then serving it with a huge cockroach in the

middle of the plate. Just to show you that no one tells him what he can and can't do in the kitchen. An artistic "up yours" to the elements of creative control.

Bruce has done this with his "two-fifty up the a\*\*" [sic], "slipped me out of her mouth," "wet her fingers," "she took off her bra and panties," "slipped it inside her" lines.

We're supposed to not only overlook this, but, I guess, like it.

Can you imagine Johnny Cash or Bob Dylan singing lyrics like this? It seems Bruce has a new code: "I am above control, accountability, and reproach."

Bruce ought to be ashamed of releasing this song. I don't want to be exposed to his selfish desire to offend for offensiveness sake! He has given the middle finger to those in his audience he knew would take offense. I feel that he intended to offend me... and hey! It worked really well.

But really, I'm just disappointed.

I have edited this CD so as to remove all traces of the filth. I will be listening to my edited copy exclusively as the real one gathers dust. I will not be rec-

ommending that people buy this CD, because for the first time I'm embarrassed today to be a Springsteen fan.

Bruce ought to be ashamed. But the thing is... I know he isn't.

Mike Walk  
 San Antonio, TX

## I NEVER CRY

Dear Editor:

May I say what a grand and glorious time it is to be a Springsteen fan? Just look at what we've been given in the last five or so years: The *Tracks* box, the Reunion tour, a live CD, *The Rising* album and tour, live DVDs of both tours, the remastered *Essential* CD, numerous media appearances including the Vote for Change tour, and now *Devils & Dust*.

VH1 Storytellers is tonight. The *Today* show Monday and Tuesday. The CD comes out the day before my birthday. I was lucky enough to get tickets to one of his shows, six days after the album is released. A grand and glorious time indeed.

Mauricio Heilbron Jr., MD  
 Long Beach, CA



## My Own Private Listening Party

# First Impressions

By Christopher Phillips

**W**hen it's midnight in Manhattan, it's no time to get cute. And when it's the eleventh hour of this magazine's production schedule, it's no time to be reviewing Bruce Springsteen's forthcoming album.

That only became a possibility this very morning, when I finally received an advance copy of *Devils & Dust*. With the exception of the title track, this album has been held tightly under lock and key—literally, I'd bet. I'm just one of many writers who have been eyeing the calendar nervously as deadlines approach, wondering how much time we'll get to spend with *D&D* before needing to have a definitive reaction. Asking, "why doesn't Bruce do this?" a local music critic pointed out to me that the White Stripes' new album is being promo'd in advance on white-labeled LPs, just like the old days. Not a foolproof internet-foiler, but a smart idea (at least to those of us who are still able to spin the black circle) and a fine collectible, to boot. Sadly, it's hard to imagine that happening in Bossland.

But all that fades now, in front of my living room stereo, where I've just heard *Devils & Dust* in full for the first time, mere days before this issue goes to press. The final strains of "Matamoros Banks" have just drifted off into silence; if it *had* been a record I was spinning, you can now imagine the sound of the needle cycling through the run-out groove, bumping the label. I've given up on the idea of actually reviewing the album here—I reviewed *Tunnel of Love* for my high school newspaper after two listens, and trust me, that's something no one ever needs to read. Most reports I'd heard from the recent official listening parties (which I was unable to attend) were along the lines of, "I bet it'll grow on me, I need to live with it for a while." And that's exactly how I feel right now.

But ah, the first listen... that's something worth talking about on its own. By the time you read this, *Devils & Dust* will already be on sale, you'll surely have bought your own copy, and you'll probably have felt that same weird, nervous anticipation I felt all day: "Please don't suck... please don't suck...." With perhaps the new, additional fear that you might

Personally, I can't stand reading lyrics as I'm hearing a new song. I want to hear a song for what it is, let it conjure up its own images, and pick out the words over time if necessary—otherwise, I'm picturing the lyric sheet the next ten times I hear the song. (Apparently, my memory is only photographic when it's not welcome). So I spent much of the

It'll be a shame if the story of this song becomes simply, "Hey, Bruce Springsteen is singing about anal sex!" (which, indeed, is all I knew about it initially). I do think Springsteen's frankness about sex is one of the many things that make him great: its matter-of-fact, part-of-life place in his songwriting; his inclusion of "The Fuse" as part of *The Rising*'s full picture; his unabashed metaphors on *Lucky Town*. The "Reno" narrator's visit to a prostitute only serves to offset where he goes in the middle of the song, as he closes his eyes and the music subtly swells. That's clearly the crux—so much so that the last line of the song feels almost like unnecessary italics. With songs like "Reno," "All I'm Thinkin' About" and "Devils & Dust," we're being introduced to a lot of characters who have taken a wrong turn, who should be somewhere else—exiles, for all practical purposes. Each of these could be a sequel to "Unsatisfied Heart," an unreleased *Born in the U.S.A.* outtake that seems particularly worth tracking down right now, if you haven't heard it.

"Long Time Comin'," my favorite long-lost composition from the *Tom Joad* tour, will take some getting used to. Just as I was thinking that it's great to hear this song filled out with a full band, in came these backing vocals, and all of a sudden I wasn't so sure. At least there are no bells or synths. (Yes, it remains to be seen whether I can make it through one of these columns without a reference to "Real World.") But more than anything, it's been a long time comin' to finally have songs like this and "The Hitter" as part of Springsteen's official canon.

It's hard to imagine Bruce ever feeling "free" enough to release records with Steve Earle's frequency, spontaneity, or stylistic variance. (Which isn't necessarily a bad thing, all things considered.) But there's a raw, rough-and-ready quality here—on the album as a whole, and a song like



hear a voice saying "AOL First Listen" every 30 seconds. The non-branded "first listen" we're talking about here is always something to savor, and they don't come around that often. I'll surely remember this one just as I remember where I was for every other Springsteen album as I heard it for the first time: *Born in the U.S.A.* (my brother's car), *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town* (my college dorm room), *The Ghost of Tom Joad* (upstairs at a Seattle coffee shop, for a *Backstreets* advance listening party complete with Xeroxed lyric sheets for those who wanted to read along).

For *The Rising*, I first heard a major chunk of it at the official listening party in Baltimore, with the lyrics projected on a movie screen as the songs played.

*Rising* event staring down at the floor between my knees. And I left befuddled—whether by the astoundingly unabashed pop of "Waitin' on a Sunny Day," or the lack of context, I'm still not sure. But when I first listened to *The Rising* in full—driving around Washington D.C., past the monuments and over the Potomac to Virginia, past the Pentagon—it made a whole lot more sense.

My primary feeling after the first spin of *Devils & Dust* is one of relief. Relief that the advance hype, of this not sounding like any other Springsteen album, is actually true; that these are songs I'll want to spend time with; that my first impulse is to press "play" and hear it all over again. "Reno," in particular, struck me immediately as truly a thing of beauty.



"Maria's Bed" in particular—that, along with this record's quick prep-time and sonic departure from the E Street, made me think of Earle. It's worth noting: those things Bruce used to say that we fans had learned to laugh off—you know, how he'd like to not take as long between albums and tours in some fashion, how he'd like to release more music in some fashion, how he'd like to use the E Street Band for some projects and not for others—they're happening. And not letting songs languish in the vaults is one of the most long-awaited developments in Bruce's career.

Digging back a decade for the majority of this album seems fairly risky, in terms of how this material might be perceived. Sure, *The Rising's* "Nothing Man" dated back a ways, but that album in general was nothing but contemporary—even to a fault, it has been argued. On *Devils & Dust*, even the "new" song was written two years ago. But very little points to any kind of writer's block on Springsteen's part; rather, there seems to be a post-*Tracks* willingness, even eagerness, to revisit material he had set aside. For someone who has long been concerned with the here-and-now, who has famously shelved albums' worth of material without looking back, it's quite a step to return to his pre-*Rising* notebooks.

Elsewhere in this issue, Steven Van Zandt talks about shelved songs, specifically disc two of *Tracks*: "Every song that ended up on that record was a lost argument for me." And I'd tend to take Steve's side in that debate. So imagine if Springsteen had returned to that material in 1989? Or even if, in 1998, Springsteen had released those *River* outtakes as a cohesive, stand-alone album. Yes, *Tracks* was manna from heaven, I wouldn't argue otherwise; but think how differently those songs on disc two would have been received and reviewed as a "lost album" from Springsteen's lean-and-hungry years, as opposed to a smattering of songs amidst a larger smattering. With that in mind, it's both inspiring and relieving that Springsteen learned a lesson from that 1998 trip through the vaults—that this collection of mid-'90s compositions comes out now as *Devils & Dust*, as an

album, rather than 15 years from now on *Tracks II*.

It's also a relief that the *Joad*-like, sonically stark tunes here, like "Black Cowboys" and "Silver Palomino," are the exceptions rather than the rule. I can probably count on one hand the number of times I've listened to *The Ghost of Tom Joad* since 1996. Which is partly just a reflection of the literary bent and storytelling nature of the album—I've only read *East of Eden* once; that doesn't mean I didn't care for the book. But as much as I love some of its stories, *Joad* never seemed to be crafted to be all that listenable. I've listened to *Joad* tour recordings far more frequently—I've often wished Springsteen had lived with and performed those songs a bit before getting them down in the studio, and you only have to compare the endings of "Across the Border" to know what I mean: in concert, he added a high, otherworldly moan that took the song to a different place. If anything, I'm grateful for *The Ghost of Tom Joad* for the tour that it enabled Springsteen to undertake—one of the greatest artistic achievements of his career, in my book.

So I'd been thinking: okay, if nothing else, *Devils & Dust* will be the springboard for another long-awaited acoustic tour. That's enough. But the fact that he *did* live with these songs for a while, coupled with production from a new set of ears, would seem to be paying off. (I'm still thinking about "Reno" and that faint percussion in the background—or was that a creaking chair? Or a woodpecker?) I can already tell I'll be spending much more time with this one in the player, as a record that stands on its own and that will warrant repeating.

AS A SONG LIKE "LEAH" fades out, I'm even thinking, I can picture that on the radio. "All the Way Home," "Maria's Bed"—"Jesus Was an Only Son," for that matter, considering the recent resurgence of religious faith in the U.S.—these could be radio songs! Yes, they could... in the retro, fantasy world of radio that I still like cling to in my head. In actuality, maybe only if Lil' Jon added a "Yay-yuh!" or two to "Reno" and a car horn bleeped out the nasty parts. As Sony geared up for the promotion of

*Devils & Dust*, a schedule listed a particular date for when the title track would hit radio, but it's hard to see how such a thing could matter much these days.

Back in 1984, waiting for the release of *Born in the U.S.A.*, the advance radio play of "Dancing in the Dark" was the rolling thunder that let us know a storm was coming. And while that song didn't grab me at first, I remember my favorite DJ digging "deep" off an advance copy of the record—practically unthinkable these days, if not undoable—and that spin of "Downbound Train" is what really whet my appetite for the album. A few years prior, that same DJ, sick of fielding requests for the Sugarhill Gang's "Apache," locked himself in his booth and played nothing but that one song over and over again, vowing to break the record at the end of his shift. He'd occasionally check in and let us know his boss was banging on the door.... I've never known how much was truth and how much was shtick, or what advertisers thought of the stunt, but it was a hell of a night on the radio. And that was down in the deep South—nowhere close to the epicenters of radio cool.

In this issue, we take a look at the current state of radio with Little Steven and pay tribute to some of the great DJs who were instrumental in Springsteen and the E Street Band's rise to fame—DJs who gave many fans their memorable "first listens" to Springsteen in the '70s. This feature was the brainchild of John Kelly, who started work on it a few years back—before the deaths of Ed Sciaky and Scott Muni saddened longtime listeners and fans. Though we didn't plan it, this issue pays posthumous tribute to Sciaky and Muni, with our final interviews with these radio legends; and as always intended, it's a tribute to the work and the legacy of all those DJs who have enriched our lives, Bruce-wise or otherwise.

To many music fans, guys like these are precious natural resources still. Every week, one friend of mine tapes Vin Scelsa's weekly broadcast and listens to it in his Walkman until the next one. Remembering Muni, Pete Townshend revealed quite a tape stash of his own: "I have a hundred hours of tapes of his shows

made over the years by a friend of mine (so I could hear what was being played in New York when it mattered to me). I know that many others will continue to hear echoes of his warm voice, and gentle temper, his incisive choice of music. We will remember him for a very long time."

I recently came across a CD of a Philly radio broadcast from the '60s (on the Philly Archives label), captured as it aired on WHAT one night in 1969, complete with commercials, and with DJ Sonny "The Mighty Burner" Hopson as much a part of the show as the now-obscure funk and soul grooves he played. How many DJs or radio shows these days would be worth recording for posterity? Who will be playing "Devils & Dust," let alone "going deep" from this album? The answer isn't "no one"—that flame is being kept alive, as my Scelsa-taping buddy can attest, and as Little Steven discusses in this issue—but they're few and far between on the AM/FM dials. The world of satellite radio seems to offer a brighter future, even if its eclecticism is neatly categorized into its dozens of channels. And when, in a rental car a few weeks back, I tuned in to Little Steven's new "Outlaw Country" channel on Sirius and heard Waylon and Emmylou on the radio as I cruised down the highway, I thought, "Maybe everything that dies, someday comes back."

Would "All the Way Home" get play even on satellite radio? Would I want it to? It'll take a few more listens for me to figure that one out. Right now I think I'll break out the headphones for a second spin, basking in the rare pleasure of that long-familiar voice whispering unfamiliar songs in my hear, heading further on up this dusty road and excited for the trip.

We'll give the album a more complete rundown in the next issue of *Backstreets*, with a song-by-song look and more, including readers' reviews. Assuming you've spent more time with the record than I have by this point, we definitely want to hear what you think. Be sure to log on to [www.backstreets.com/polldd.html](http://www.backstreets.com/polldd.html) and take our online *Devils & Dust* Readers' Poll. We'll tally the results in #83, along with as many reader reviews as space permits. Happy listening. ➡



# TOUR

## The Ghost of the Ghost of Tom Joad

### It's a One-Man Show

By Andrew E. Massimino

**O**n October 4, 2003, Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band played to a sold-out Shea Stadium (capacity 56,000) in New York, bringing the record-setting Rising Tour to a triumphant close. Only a year-and-a-half later Springsteen is downsizing, playing venues one twentieth that size and flying solo in support of his latest record. As we head to press with this issue, we can split our comments about Bruce Springsteen's upcoming *Devils and Dust* tour into two categories—what we know about the tour and what we don't. With each day the former is gaining steam on the lat-

ter, but as we all know, a Bruce Springsteen tour is always a work in progress, taking shape day-by-day, city-by-city, even song-by-song. As Jon Landau told Billboard on April 6, "Bruce is rehearsing the show right now, creating a very specific perspective for it. As is always the case with Bruce, the set will evolve right up until the last show."

The two-month, 31-city, 33-date tour focuses solely on major-market cities in the United States and Europe. So... what don't we know? Quite a bit. Will there be shows past the end of June and on through the summer? (Probably.) Will band members be added as the tour progresses, as rumored, culminating ultimately in a full E

Street Band show? (Probably not.) Will Bruce eventually succumb to each and every fan's request until every one of his older songs has been played, including "War Nurse" and "Evacuation of the West"? (OK, that one we're pretty sure is a big N-O. Thank God.)

As for what we do know, well, let's start with the basics. The tour opens in Detroit on April 25, although there were two "warm-up" or rehearsal shows in Asbury Park on April 21 and 22 (see setlists next page). If those two shows are any indication of what's to come early on—and for ten years now rehearsal shows have been just that—then get ready for a heavy dose of the new record. Nine songs from *Devils and Dust* were played at each rehearsal show, and overall, only two songs from the new record were not played—"All the Way Home" and "All I'm Thinkin' About," two of the catchiest songs on the record.

The tour makes its way westward right out of the gate, landing in Texas, Arizona, and California before turning back to pick up Colorado. Many of the new songs are set in the Southwest and one might make the obvious connection, especially since the *Joad* tour began similarly with four early shows in California. Either way, with only 14 scheduled dates in the U.S. the demand for tickets has been a bit overwhelming ever since tickets first went on sale April 8th. Many fans posted their bewilderment and frustrations on message boards as most cities sold out in less than ten minutes. But that wasn't the case everywhere. On last check, tickets for shows in Dallas, Phoenix and St. Paul all had available seats, and good ones at that. Over thirty years into his legendary career, Bruce Springsteen still has regional bias.

That being said, the only U.S. city to get two shows on the first leg of this tour was Los Angeles, and both shows at Hollywood's historic Pantages Theater sold



out in minutes. Older Springsteen territories like Philadelphia, Boston, East Rutherford and Cleveland experienced similarly lightning-quick sales, but so far are only tabbed for a single show each. Of course, the smaller sizes of the venues being booked are also contributing to the ticket-purchasing difficulty. Seat capacities range anywhere from 2,500 to 8,500; most of the smaller rooms are the older theaters like Boston's Orpheum and Philadelphia's Tower, while the larger capacities tend to be arenas that drape off half their seats in hopes of providing more intimacy for a solo, acoustic show.

It will be Springsteen's first solo tour since supporting *The Ghost of Tom Joad* from late Fall 1995 through Spring 1997, but it's doubtful that this tour will be a total retread of that one. For starters there will be a piano on stage, and from all appearances it will be well used. Springsteen performed four or five songs at the piano at each of the rehearsals, expanding the role that instrument played in selected solo spots on both the Reunion and Rising tours. Comparing those two tours to the one on which he's about to embark, Bruce told NBC's Matt Lauer, "after I do something that's very external, like I do with the E Street Band—where everything is out and there's a lot of

### The Quiet Barnstorm: Spring 2005

April 25	Fox Theatre	Detroit, MI
April 28	Nokia Theatre at Grand Prairie	Dallas, TX
April 30	Glendale Arena	Glendale, AZ
May 2	Pantages Theatre	Los Angeles, CA
May 3	Pantages Theatre	Los Angeles, CA
May 5	Paramount Theatre	Oakland, CA
May 7	Lecture Hall at the Convention Center	Denver, CO
May 10	Xcel Energy Center	St. Paul, MN
May 11	Rosemont Theatre	Chicago, IL
May 14	Patriot Center	Fairfax, VA
May 15	CSU Convocation Center	Cleveland, OH
May 17	Tower Theatre	Philadelphia, PA
May 19	Continental Airlines Arena	East Rutherford, NJ
May 20	Orpheum Theatre	Boston, MA
May 24	The Point	Dublin, IRL
May 27	Royal Albert Hall	London, GBR
May 28	Royal Albert Hall	London, GBR
May 30	Forest National	Brussels, BEL
June 1	Pavelló Olímpic Badalona	Badalona, ESP
June 2	Palacio De Deportes de la Comunidad	Madrid, ESP
June 4	Palamaguti Arena	Bologna, ITA
June 6	Palalottomatica Arena	Rome, ITA
June 7	Milan Forum	Milan, ITA
June 11	Color Line Arena	Hamburg, GER
June 12	ICC	Berlin, GER
June 13	Olympia Hall	Munich, GER
June 15	Festhalle	Frankfurt, GER
June 16	Philipschalle	Dusseldorf, GER
June 19	Ahoy	Rotterdam, NED
June 20	Bercy	Paris, FRA
June 22	Forum	Copenhagen, DEN
June 23	Scandinavium	Gothenberg, SWE
June 25	Hovet	Stockholm, SWE



energy—I like to do something internal, basically. That helps me express both things, you know. I always say: the E Street Band, that's my Italian side, that's my mother and her family. When I go to *Nebraska* and *Tom Joad* and this record, I think the moody Irish side comes out."

The tour finishes its first (and right now only) U.S. leg on May 20 in Boston. And in good Irish-American form, Springsteen then takes it directly to Dublin, Ireland on May 24 for the first of 19 European shows. Over the course of one month the *Devils and Dust* tour will blow into 10 countries, with stops in 18 different cities—five of them in Germany alone. As with the U.S. leg, only one European city will get two shows—London's Royal Albert Hall will host Springsteen May 27 and 28.

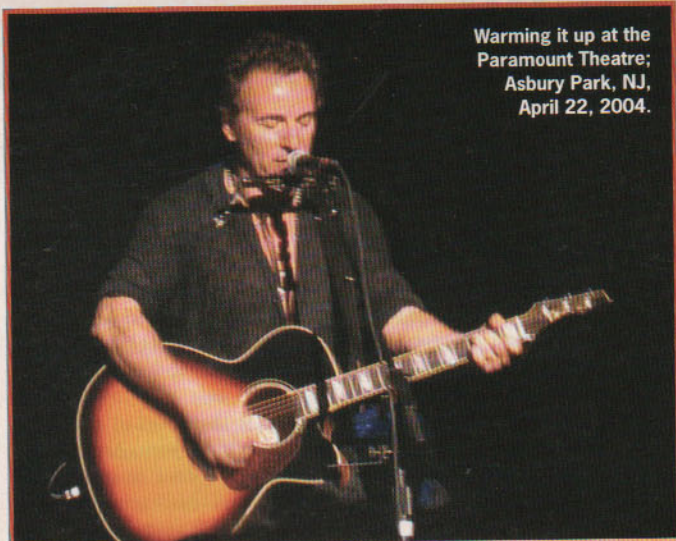
While the June 25 Stockholm show that ends the European leg is the last confirmed date as we go to press, Summertime Bruce probably won't be over so soon. *Billboard* reports that additional North American dates are "likely," with Jon Landau saying, "Our hope is that sometime by the fall we will come back to the U.S. and make some additional appearances in our biggest Bruce markets." And while the idea of adding E Street Band members or other musicians to this tour has fallen by the wayside, don't rule out the possibility of an E Street detour later in the summer, with

plans reportedly in the works to celebrate the 30th anniversary of *Born to Run* in high style. And in any case, the Springsteen organization is already looking ahead to an E Street Future, with Landau telling *Billboard*, "The full rock versions of some of the new songs is sure to be part of the next E Street Band tour."

**W**hile the *Devils & Dust* show itself remains a solo affair, it wasn't planned that way from the beginning. While gearing up for the tour Springsteen spent quite a bit of time in March experimenting with different players at the Paramount Theater in Asbury Park, including Steve Jordan on drums, Soozie Tyrell on fiddle, and Nils Lofgren on guitar. After having Nils return alone to try it out as a duo, Springsteen later told *Rolling Stone*, "...what tends to be dramatic is either the full band or you onstage by yourself. Playing alone creates a sort of drama and intimacy for the audience. They know it's just them and just you."

On April 4, Springsteen gave a few hundred lucky fans a glimpse of what that kind of drama and intimacy entails. Taping an installment of *Storytellers* for VH1, Springsteen moved back and forth from acoustic guitar to piano, introducing new versions of established songs like "The Rising" and "Thunder Road," and debuting two new ones, "Devils and Dust" and "Jesus Was an Only Son." [See page 16 for more on VH1 *Storytellers*.] The show began airing April 23, but soon after the taping Springsteen spoke up—again in *Rolling Stone*—clarifying the scope of the anticipated tour: "It's not about acoustic versions of my hits—that's what's not going to happen. I want to forewarn potential ticket buyers: I'm not going to be playing an acoustic version of 'Thunder Road.'"

The week of April 11 found Bruce back at the Paramount rehearsing by himself, running through arrangements of, among others, "Highway Patrolman," "American Skin" and *The Rising* lost gem, "Nothing Man." Even though logic tells us to expect setlists heavy on *Devils* with a healthy dose of *Tom Joad* and *Nebraska* mixed in, sometimes logic gets in the way of inspira-



Warming it up at the Paramount Theatre; Asbury Park, NJ, April 22, 2004.

MIKE BRAZINSKI PHOTO

## The Devil Went Down to Jersey

Just as this issue goes to press, Springsteen opened up two of his rehearsals at the Paramount Theatre in Asbury Park to the public. Bruce told stories and talked about his craft, tickled the ivories, and debuted a distortion-heavy, Delta-blues "Reason to Believe," for a taste of the tour to come.

### April 21, 2005

Devils and Dust  
Youngstown  
Lonesome Day  
Black Cowboys  
Long Time Comin'  
Silver Palomino  
For You\*  
Tougher Than the Rest\*  
Part Man, Part Monkey  
Maria's Bed  
Highway Patrolman  
Used Cars  
Further On (Up the Road)  
My Hometown\*  
Lost in the Flood\*  
The Rising  
Jesus Was an Only Son\*  
Leah  
The Hitter  
Matamoros Banks

This Hard Land  
My Best Was Never Good Enough  
The Promised Land

### April 22, 2005

Reason to Believe  
Devils and Dust  
Youngstown  
Lonesome Day  
Long Time Comin'  
Silver Palomino  
For You\*  
Real World\*  
Part Man, Part Monkey  
Maria's Bed  
Highway Patrolman  
Reno  
Racing in the Street\*  
The Rising  
Further On (Up the Road)  
Jesus Was an Only Son\*  
Leah  
The Hitter  
Matamoros Banks

Waitin' on a Sunny Day  
Bobby Jean  
The Promised Land

\*featuring Bruce on piano

#### BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN *Devils & Dust* Tour 2005

##### Tentative Set List

- Devils and Dust
- Youngstown (no talk)
- Lonesome Day (no talk)
- Talk
- Black Cowboys
- Talk
- Long Time Comin'
- Talk
- Silver Palomino (right into→)
- For You
- Tougher Than the Rest (?)
- Part Man **OR** Brilliant Disguise
- Highway Patrolman **OR** Reno
- Further On
- Hometown **OR** Lost in the Flood
- The Rising
- Talk
- Jesus
- Talk
- Leah
- Talk
- Hitter **OR** Galveston **OR** Sinaloa Cowboys
- Talk
- Matamoros Banks

- This Hard Land **OR** Sunny Day
- My Best Was Never Good Enough
- Promised Land

The official setlist-in-progress, as of the Asbury Park rehearsal shows.

tion. And whatever inspired Springsteen at the April 22 rehearsal show to play 1992's "Real World" at the piano before switching to a Gretsch electric guitar to pound out the Tunnel Tour classic "Part Man, Part Monkey," well, let's just say, "Run with it, Bruce. We ain't so big on logic ourselves!"

And one last thing as this tour gets rolling... Don't forget, we can't keep up with these fun little details all by our lonesome... and we never have. We count on con-

tributions from fellow fans and readers to help us with timely and accurate concert coverage. If you want to help out, e-mail setlists and concert reports to onstage@backstreets.com.

To send photos, ticket stubs, concert ads, handwritten setlists, etc., e-mail scans to images@backstreets.com, or mail to Backstreets, 1818 Airport Road #300, Chapel Hill, NC 27514 USA. Thanks for helping out. We'll be seeing you out there on that road somewhere! 🎸



# DISC

Two faces has the DualDisc

## Devils on Disc

By Andrew E. Massimino

On April 26, Bruce Springsteen releases his 19th album, *Devils & Dust*, recorded in large part without the E Street Band and almost entirely produced by Brendan O'Brien. Springsteen fans will remember it was O'Brien who was largely responsible for the sound of 2002's *The Rising*, while he also received credit for the speed at which the sessions ran. Much of the same can be said this time out—by all accounts the recording sessions in Los Angeles, New Jersey and Atlanta were quick and efficient—although O'Brien does share production credits with Springsteen and Chuck Plotkin on two tracks, "All the Way Home" and "Long Time Comin'."

*Devils & Dust* marks a return to Springsteen's character-based storytelling, last seen to this degree on 1995's *The Ghost of Tom Joad*, and in many ways, much of the new record harkens back to the *Joad* era. Many of the songs are set in the Southwest and West and were written while Springsteen was touring in support of *Joad* from 1995-'97, which helps explain why so much of the subject matter, style and perspective of *Devils* is similar to that of *Joad*. Two songs were actually

performed on that tour: "The Hitter," which details a conversation between an old boxer and his mother through a chained door, and "Long Time Comin'," a hopeful tale of a father realizing that the good ol' days are right in front of him. And at least three others deal in some way with parent-child relationships, making that one of the central themes of the new record.

But this record is not necessarily child-friendly. For the first time in his career an "adult imagery" warning was placed on Springsteen's record, mostly for a few lines in the song "Reno," which places the main character in a hotel room with a prostitute. Their conversation is candid and frank, but Springsteen has described it as a love song. The second verse is a remembrance of love lost, and the final line puts the visit with the prostitute in clear perspective: "It wasn't the best I ever had, not even close."

"Reno" is one good example of the differences between *Devils & Dust* and the *Tom Joad* record. Having Brendan O'Brien on board certainly enhanced the song presentation, giving the record a more fleshed-out sound. The strings and horns that appear on "Reno" add a poignancy and sadness that would have been left solely to the lyrics ten years

ago. O'Brien and Springsteen worked off of original demos to rerecord songs and create a fuller sound, so despite being an acoustic album, *Devils & Dust* doesn't really sound like *Nebraska* or *Tom Joad*, and the instrumentation is largely responsible for that. So, before the strings—provided by the Nashville String Machine, who handled the same duties on *The Rising*—and horns, there's a semblance of a core band here with Steve Jordan on drums and O'Brien himself

on bass guitar. Springsteen handles all the guitars and keyboards, but the standout instrument on this record has got to be Springsteen's voice.

Singing in a variety of styles, Springsteen's voice covers a ton of emotional territory. There's maturity and resignation on the title track, a muddled weariness on "The

Hitter," and most noteworthy, a whispering country tenor on the album's catchiest track, "All I'm Thinkin' About." In between, Springsteen spends time with his mid-tempo rock voice (think *Human Touch*) and his *Tom Joad*-western shading, showing extraordinary range over the course of these 12 songs.

The oldest of these "new" songs is "All the Way Home." It was originally given to Southside Johnny in 1991, and he recorded it as a ballad for his album, *Better Days*. Here the song is revisited, rewritten, and reworked until it's hardly recognizable from its first appearance. Sharing a line from 1992's "My Beautiful Reward"

("crashin' like a drunk on a bar room floor"), the song and its current production would have been right at home on that same year's *Human Touch* record.

E Streeters Soozie Tyrell and Patti Scialfa make appearances on the record providing occasional background vocals, and Soozie's violin playing is featured on the country-romps "Long Time Comin'" and "Maria's Bed." Other musical credits of note include Marty Rifkin, who also

played on *Joad*; Mark Pender (of the Jukes, the Horns of Love, and Max Weinberg 7) on trumpet; Brendan O'Brien playing something called the electric sarangi on "All the Way Home," and it wouldn't be an O'Brien production without him having a go at the hurdy gurdy, this time on "Maria's Bed."

Springsteen gets percussion credits on two songs and drum credits on two more, actually getting behind the kit on both "Jesus Was an Only Son" and "All I'm Thinkin' About."

Also notable is what's on the flipside. Yes, contrary to what Danny Federici was told in *Blood Brothers*, some CDs do now have flip sides. In the U.S., *Devils & Dust* is being sold as a DualDisc, a new two-sided format with CD content on one side and DVD content on the other. One downside of the DualDisc format is suggested by the small type on the back of the package: "The audio side of this disc does not conform to CD specifications



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**Devils & Dust**

CD AUDIO SIDE

1. "Devils & Dust"
2. "All the Way Home"
3. "Reno"
4. "Long Time Comin'"
5. "Black Cowboys"
6. "Maria's Bed"
7. "Silver Palomino"
8. "Jesus Was an Only Son"
9. "Leash"
10. "The Hitter"
11. "All I'm Thinkin' About"
12. "Matamoros Banks"

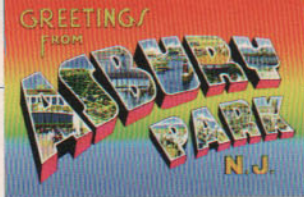
Produced by Brendan O'Brien  
bruce.springsteen.net

DVD SIDE

- Entire album in 5.1 channel surround sound and in 2-channel stereo
- Special *Devils & Dust* film by noted photographer and filmmaker Danny Clinch, including rare, never-before-seen acoustic performances of "Devils & Dust," "Long Time Comin'," "Reno," "All I'm Thinkin' About" and "Matamoros Banks" plus Bruce's personal introductions to the tracks

Part of the original Columbia buyway for the *Devils & Dust* DualDisc, offering a "special deluxe accordion-style package" that wasn't to be, as well as non-final cover art.





and therefore not all DVD players and CD players will play the audio side of this disc." That's quite a caveat for a new album, available only in this new format. (The DualDisc is the only version available in the U.S.; outside of the States, the *Devils & Dust* package comes with a standard CD and separate DVD). But if everything works properly, it's quite a bonus: audio content on the DVD side includes the complete album in 5.1 Dolby Digital Surround and PCM Stereo; video content includes five exclusive, solo-acoustic performances of songs from the album, with Springsteen's personal introductions. Danny Clinch (who also took the album cover photo for *The Rising* and filmed the "Countin' on a Miracle" video shown after 2002-2003 shows) filmed these performances in February 2005 in Colts Neck, NJ, with Springsteen playing "Devils & Dust," "Long Time Comin'," "Reno," "All I'm Thinkin' About," and "Matamoros Banks."

At the other end of the technological spectrum, *Devils & Dust* keeps up Columbia's admirable streak of releasing nearly all of Springsteen's output on vinyl LPs. (Only *Essential* and *Tracks* didn't make it to LP, though 18 *Tracks* did.) While it doesn't come with a DVD, vinyl-lovers will be happy to see *Devils & Dust* pressed as a two-record set, with three songs per side.

No commercial singles are yet planned from *Devils & Dust*, but Sony did issue a promotional single for the title track. It's a one-track CD single in a cardboard sleeve, with a cover photo by Anton Corbijn. And it plays in all CD players!

One *Devils & Dust* package you won't see is the "special edition" that was touted at the time of the album announcement. Planned to be a deluxe package along the lines of the "hardback book" edition of *The Rising*, it was advertised as including "bonus photographs and unique song-specific elements for each of the CD's 12 tracks." An accordion-style package would have had pockets, each holding a different item (a tarot card, for example) with printed lyrics for each song. A prototype was created but ultimately not approved, and the idea was scrapped. Now there's a collectible to get your hands on.

## Teacher's Pet

# Fourth Annual RCDS Benefit

By Sandy Wells

For one night each April, the Rumson Country Day School becomes the School of Rock. For the fourth year in a row, RCDS parents and school staffers were the only invitees to attend a private benefit down the road at the Stone Pony in Asbury Park, NJ. The special guest and host for the evening: Bruce Springsteen. In fact, Bruce stood at the door for the April 10 event and greeted arriving guests, graciously thanking them for attending.

When the music began, the crowd was treated to a few songs by Bobby Bandiera and his band, who as usual backed Bruce for the evening. After "Wipeout" and "The Wanderer," Bruce took the stage for another classic, Wilson Pickett's "634-5789." Several fans in the crowd pulled out their cell phones and dialed

up a family member or friend so that they could hear Bruce singing the song. Whether it was the nature of the song or the nature of the night, Bruce didn't mind cell phones in this case: he began grabbing them at random and talking to the surprised people on the other end. Imagine sitting at home, your cell phone rings, you answer and Bruce Springsteen is on the other end, singing and saying hello!

That golden oldie beginning notwithstanding, this year's RCDS was far less cover-heavy than in previous years. With a band nearly identical to that which had recently backed Springsteen at the 2004 holiday jams, they were all better prepared to break out more of Bruce's own catalog, and that's exactly what they did: songs like "Spirit in the Night," "All That Heaven Will Allow," and "Seaside Bar Song" made for a

set that shared much with those Harry's Roadhouse shows.

Patti Scialfa guested as in years past, adding "Son of a Preacher Man" to her RCDS repertoire, and Southside Johnny played a far bigger part this year, joining in for "Talk to Me," "The Fever," "I Don't Want to Go Home," and more. Still, anyone expecting those classic covers didn't go home disappointed, with "Bad Moon Rising," "Seven Nights to Rock," and "Shake" all in the mix.

The finale for the evening, "Twist and Shout," got a new "twist" when Bruce called RCDS school staffers up on stage to help him do the number. One teacher who was at the show gushed that she was "skin to skin with Bruce during the song—my mouth was on the microphone and his mouth was on the microphone... It was the night of my life!" Being a teacher has its own rewards, but on this night at the Stone Pony, some lucky Rumson Country Day School teachers took a trip to the land of hope and dreams.

Handwritten list of songs and setlist details:

- 1. 634-5789 (E)
- 2. Talk to Me (E)
- 3. 7 Nights (E)
- 4. 2 Hearts (C)
- 5. Spirit (E)
- 6. Rendezvous (F)
- 7. From Small Things (E)
- 8. All That Heaven (E)
- 9. Boy From N.Y. (E)
- 10. Son of a Preacher (E)
- 11. Further on up the Road (E)
- 12. Sunny Day (C)
- 13. Fever (E)
- 14. Seaside Bar (E)
- 15. Darlington (G)
- 16. Bad Moon (E)
- 17. Stand on It (E)
- 18. Hold on (G)
- 19. Shake (G)
- 20. 10th Avenue (F)
- 21. Twist (D)

## HONOR ROLL

April 10, 2005 • The Stone Pony, Asbury Park, NJ

634-5789

Talk to Me\*

Seven Nights to Rock

Two Hearts

Spirit in the Night

Rendezvous

All That Heaven Will Allow

Tell Him\*\*

Son of a Preacher Man\*\*

Boy From New York City\*\*

Further on up the Road

Waitin' on a Sunny Day

The Fever\*

I Don't Want to Go Home\*

Darlington County

Seaside Bar Song

Bad Moon Rising

Stand on It

Shake\*

If I Should Fall Behind

Tenth Avenue Freeze-out

Twist and Shout\*

\*with Southside Johnny

\*\*with Patti Scialfa



## The correct math for an induction speech

### U2 + BS

By Andrew E. Massimino

Every year in mid-March the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame holds its annual induction ceremony at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City, and recent history has repeatedly seen two men emerge to stand front and center and try to lay claim to the title of "industry standard" for induction/acceptance speeches. On March 14, 2005, those same two men, Bono and Bruce Springsteen, went toe-to-toe, mano-a-mano, dramatic pause vs. comedic pause, as Springsteen inducted U2 into Rock's Hallowed Halls. Both men rose to the occasion, bringing their full arsenal of poignant tales, witty turns, and poetic phrasings: Springsteen, the wise-cracking storyteller, whose context-giving testimony is delivered as prose, and Bono, the limelight-loving toastmaster, who's part Bill Clinton, part Bob Dylan, and part Charles Bukowski. Much like the landscape of rock music today, it seems that few others care enough or are talented enough to accept the challenge of title-holder, but these two appear to relish the opportunities to shine at these gatherings while enjoying each other's respective talents and mad-speech-givin' skillz in their mutual admiration society. We're just happy we get to watch.

It's actually the second straight year Springsteen was chosen to induct (he did the honors for

Jackson Browne in 2004, and in the past has handled the duties for Roy Orbison, Bob Dylan, and Creedence Clearwater Revival), and he did not disappoint. Some may recall that it was Bono who inducted Springsteen six years ago, waxing poetic about the heart of America and the dreams still worth dreaming. "You always want an Irishman to give your induction speech," Springsteen informed the crowd that night. This time it was Bruce's turn to expound on his frontman friend, describing "one of the greatest and most endearingly naked messianic complexes in rock and roll...and it takes one to know one." And commenting on Bono's ever-growing humanitarian efforts, Springsteen noted that he is "one of the only musicians to devote his personal faith and the ideals of his band into the real world in a way that remains true to rock's earliest implications of freedom and connection and the possibility of something better."

But it wasn't all kind words and bestowed praise. Springsteen's description of Bono's hairstyle choices and body type gave the room a hearty chuckle, and his brilliant account of first seeing U2's iPod ad—told in the exaggerated voice of a father reading bedtime tales—is absolutely priceless. The only response Bono could muster: "Born in the U.S.A., my arse. That man was born on the north side of Dublin.... In fact, I think he's tall for an Irishman."

Of course, as only one-fourth of the still-vibrant band U2, Bono had some highly deserving company on the stage with him, and Springsteen took great care in spreading the wealth. After noting that U2 is "the last band of whom I would be able to name all the members," Springsteen gave proper respect to the keepers of their sonic sound. Creating detailed images of the individual roles that Adam Clayton, Larry Mullen, and The Edge inhabit, Springsteen helped underscore

his premise that with rock 'n' roll, "the whole had better equal much more than the sum of its parts."

He later helped Bono and the boys speak truth to that premise—albeit adversely—by joining them onstage for the seminal "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For." Bono had ended the previous song, "Pride (In the Name of Love)," with a closing couplet from the chorus of Springsteen's "The Promised Land," and the two legends together at center stage on this rare occasion brimmed with

musical possibilities. But for all the big, bold themes and shared territory these two have mined, Springsteen and U2 have almost incompatible sounds. U2 might count it off "*uno, dos, tres, catorce*," but U2 with Bruce pulled up a bit short at 13. It wasn't awful, but to be fair it just sat there going nowhere. In the end they were just rubbing sticks together.

That's all right. We'll let the rock 'n' roll kids of 2025 look back at the tape and see if it mattered. Tell 'em to watch those speeches, too. Watch 'em and learn, kids. ➡



ALSO ON THE BILL OF INDUCTORS on March 14 was the E Street Band's own Little Steven, only this night he might have best been referred to as *The Sopranos*' own. Appearing in character as that show's Silvio Dante—and flanked by actors James Gandolfini and Steve Schirripa, also in character as Tony Soprano and Bobby Baccalieri—Van Zandt delivered an induction speech for superagent and legendary band promoter Frank Barsalona. Barsalona had a hand in guiding the careers of both Springsteen and U2, as well as Led Zeppelin, The Who, The Clash and others. His vision that bands had to be great as a live act before they moved forward paid dividends in the long term as he opened the first rock 'n' roll agency called Premier Talent. All that won him a spot in the Hall of Fame...and a new title from the trio onstage: "the Godfather of Rock and Roll." —AEM

### THE SOUND OF "SILENCE"

February 13 brought a Grammy win for Bruce—and a feather in Joe Grushecky's cap as well, when the songwriting pair's "Code of Silence" was honored by the Grammys. Bruce won the Solo Rock Vocal Performance award for the live recording of the song on 2003's *The Essential Bruce Springsteen*.



# We Are Not Ironists

Springsteen inducts U2 into the Rock Hall / March 14, 2005

UNO, DOS, TRES, CATORCE. THAT TRANSLATES as one, two, three, fourteen. That is the correct math for a rock 'n' roll band. For in art, and love, and rock 'n' roll, the whole had better equal much more than the sum of its parts, or else you're just rubbing two sticks together in search of fire. A great rock band searches for the same kind of combustible force that fueled the expansion of the universe after the big bang. You want the earth to shake and spit fire, you want the sky to split apart and for God to pour out. It's embarrassing to want so much and expect so much from music, except sometimes it happens: the Sun Sessions, *Highway 61*, *Sgt. Peppers*, the Band, Robert Johnson, *Exile on Main Street*, *Born to Run*...

oops, I meant to leave that one out. Uh... the Sex Pistols, Aretha Franklin, the Clash, James Brown, the power of Public Enemy's *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*. This is music meant to take on not only the powers that be but on a good day, the universe and God himself, if he was listening. It demands accountability, and U2 belongs on this list.

It was the early '80s. I went with Pete Townshend—always wanted to catch the first whiff of those about to unseat us—to a club in London. There they were: a young Bono, single-handedly pioneering the Irish mullet, the Edge (what kind of name was that?), Adam, and Larry. I was listening to the last band of whom I would be able to name all of its members. They had an exciting show and a big, beautiful sound. It lifted the roof. We met afterwards, and they were nice young men—and they were Irish. Irish. Now, this would play an enormous part in their success in the States. For while the English occasionally have the refined sensibilities to overcome, we Irish and Italians have no such problem. We come through the door fists and hearts first. U2, with the dark, chiming sound of heaven at their command (which, of course, is the sound of unrequited love and longing—their greatest theme), their search for God intact, this was a band that wanted to lay claim to not only this world but had their eyes on the next one, too. Now, they're a real band; each member plays a vital part. I believe they actually practice some form of democracy—toxic poison in a band's head. In Iraq, maybe. In rock, no. Yet, they survive. They have harnessed the time bomb that exists in the heart of every great rock 'n' roll band that usually explodes, as we see regularly from this stage. But they seemed to have innately understood the primary rule of rock band job security: "Hey, asshole, the other guy is more important than you think he is!" They are both a step forward and direct descendants of the great bands who believed rock music could shake things up in the world, dared to have faith in their audience, who believed if they played their best it would bring out the best in you. They believed in pop stardom and the big time. Now, this requires foolishness and a calculating mind. It also requires a deeply held faith in the work you're doing and in its powers to transform. U2 hungered for it all and built a sound, and they wrote the songs that demanded it. They're keepers of some of the most beautiful sonic architecture in rock and roll.

The Edge, the Edge, the Edge, the Edge. He is a rare and true guitar original and one of the subtlest guitar heroes of all time. He's dedicated to ensemble playing, and he subsumes his guitar ego in the group. But do not

be fooled. Think Jimi Hendrix, Chuck Berry, Neil Young, Pete Townshend—guitarists who defined the sound of their band and their times. If you play like them, you sound like them. If you are playing those rhythmic two-note sustained fourths, drenched in echo, you are going to sound like the Edge, my son. Go back to the drawing board, and chances are you won't have much luck. There are only a handful of guitar stylists who can create a world with their instrument, and he's one of them. The Edge's guitar playing creates enormous space and vast landscapes. It is a thrilling and a heartbreaking sound that hangs over you like the unsettled sky. In the turf it stakes out, it is inherently spiritual, it is grace and it is a gift.

Now, all of this has to be held down by something. The deep sureness of Adam Clayton's bass and the rhythms of Larry Mullen's elegant drumming hold the band down while propelling it forward. It's in U2's great rhythm section that the band finds its sexuality and its dangerousness. Listen to "Desire," she moves in "Mysterious Ways," the pulse of "With or Without You." Together Larry and Adam create the element that suggests the ecstatic possibilities of that other kingdom—the one below the earth and below the belt—that no great rock band can lay claim to the title without. Now, Adam always strikes me as the professorial one, the sophisticated member. He creates not only the musical but the physical stability on his side of the stage. The tone and depth



of his bass playing has allowed the band to move from rock to dance music and beyond. One of the first things I noticed about U2 was that underneath the guitar and the bass, they have these very modern rhythms going on. Rather than a straight 2 and 4, Larry often plays with a lot of syncopation, and that connects the band to modern dance textures. The drums often sounded high and tight, and he was swinging down there, and this gave the band a unique profile and allowed their rock textures to soar above on a bed of his rhythm. Now Larry, of course, besides being an incredible drummer, bears the burden of being the band's requisite "good-looking member," something we somehow overlooked in the E Street Band. We have to settle for "charismatic." The girls love on Larry Mullen. I have a female assistant that would like to sit on Larry's drum stool. A male one, too. We all have our crosses to bear.

Bono, where do I begin? Jeans designer, soon-to-be World Bank operator, just plain operator, seller of the Brooklyn Bridge—oh, no, he played under the Brooklyn Bridge, that's right. Soon-to-be mastermind operator of the Bono Burger franchise, where more than one billion stories will be told by a crazy Irishman. I realize that it's a dirty job and somebody has to do it. But don't quit your day job yet, my friend, you're pretty good at it. And a sound this big needs somebody to ride herd over it, and ride herd over it he does. His voice, big-hearted and open, thoroughly decent no matter how hard he tries. Now he's a great frontman. Against the odds, he is not your mom's standard skinny, ex-junkie archetype. He has the physique of a rugby player... well, an ex-rugby player. Shamen, shyster, one of the greatest and most endearingly naked messianic complexes in rock 'n' roll. God bless you, man! It takes one to know one, of course. You see, every

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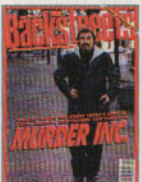
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good Irish and Italian-Irish frontman knows that before James Brown there was Jesus. So hold the McDonald arches on the stage set, boys, we are not ironists. We are creations of the heart, and of the earth, and of the stations of the cross. There's no gettin' out of it. He is gifted with an operatic voice and a beautiful falsetto rare among strong rock singers. But most important, his is a voice shot through with self-doubt. That's what makes that big sound work. It is this element of Bono's talent, along with his beautiful lyric writing, that gives the often-celestial music of U2 its fragility and its realness. It is the questioning, the constant questioning in Bono's voice, where the band stakes its claim to its humanity and declares its commonality with us. Now Bono's voice often sounds like it's shouting not over top of the band but from deep within it: "Here we are, Lord, this mess, in your image." He delivers all of this with great drama and an occasional smirk that says, "Kiss me, I'm Irish." He's one of the great frontmen of the past 20 years. He is also one of the only musicians to devote his personal faith and the ideals of his band into the real world in a way that remains true to rock's earliest implications of freedom and connection and the possibility of something better.

Now the band's beautiful songwriting—"Pride (In the Name of Love)," "Sunday Bloody Sunday," "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For," "One," "Where the Streets Have No Name," "Beautiful Day"—reminds us of the stakes that the band always plays for. It's an incredible songbook. In their music, you hear the spirituality as home and as quest. How do you find God unless he's in your heart, in your desire, in your feet? I believe this is a big part of what's kept their band together all of these years. See, bands get formed by accident, but they don't survive by accident. It takes will, intent, a sense of shared purpose, and a tolerance for your friends' fallibilities—and they of yours. And that only evens the odds. U2 has not only evened the odds but they've beaten them by continuing to do their finest work and remaining at the top of their game and the charts for 25 years. I feel a great affinity for these guys as people as well as musicians.

Well, there I was sitting on the couch in my pajamas with my eldest son. He was watching TV. I was doing one of my favorite things: I was tallying up all the money I passed up in endorsements over the years and thinking of all the fun I could have had with it. Suddenly I hear "Uno, dos, tres, catorce!" I look up. But instead of the silhouettes of the hippie-wannabes bouncing around in the iPod commercial, I see my boys! Oh my God! They sold out! Now, what I know about the iPod is this: it is a device that plays music. Of course, their new song sounded great, my pals were doing great, but methinks I hear the footsteps of my old tape operator Jimmy Iovine somewhere. Willy, smart. Now, personally, I live an insanely expensive lifestyle that my wife barely tolerates. I burn money, and that calls for huge amounts of cash flow. But, I also have a ludicrous image of myself that keeps me from truly cashing in. You can see my problem. Woe is me. So the next morning, I call up Jon Landau (or as I refer to him, "the American Paul McGuinness"), and I say, "Did you see that iPod thing?" and he says, "Yes." And he says, "And I hear they didn't take any money." And I said, "They didn't take any money?!" and he says, "No." I think: smart, wily Irish guys. Anybody—anybody can do an ad and take the money. But to do the ad and *not* take the money... that's smart. That's wily. I tell Jon, I say, "Jon, I want you to call up Bill Gates or whoever is behind this thing and float this: a red, white, and blue iPod, signed by Bruce 'The Boss' Springsteen. And remember, no matter how much money he offers, *don't take it!*"

At any rate, after that evening for the next month or so, I hear emanating from my lovely 14-year-old son's room, day after day, down the hall calling out in a voice that has recently dropped very low: *uno, dos, tres, catorce*. The correct math for rock and roll. Thank you, boys.

This band has carried their faith in the great inspirational and resurrective of power of rock 'n' roll with them. They've never faltered—only a little bit. They believed in themselves, but more importantly, they believed in you, too. Thank you Bono, Edge, Adam and Larry. Please welcome U2 to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. 🐾



## the backstreets jukebox

1. Bruce Springsteen  
*"Devils & Dust"*  
Columbia (CD)

2. John Fogerty  
*Deja Vu All Over Again*  
Geffen (CD)

3. The Hold Steady  
*Separation Sunday*  
Frenchkiss (advance CD)

4. Sonny Hopson  
*Original 1969 Philadelphia AM Radio Broadcast*  
Philly Archives (CD)

5. Crooked Fingers  
*Dignity & Shame*  
Merge (CD)

6. Soundtrack of Our Lives  
*Origin Vol. 1*  
Republic (CD)

7. Jason Falkner  
*Bliss Descending*  
Wreckchord (CD)

8. Lyrics Born  
*Same!@#\$*  
Quannum Projects (CD)

9. Various Artists  
*Mojo Presents: Southern Soul*  
MOJO (CD)

10. Ray LaMontagne  
*Trouble*  
RCA (CD)

**10** records  
that helped make  
this issue possible



I wanna know if love is real

## Story Hour

By Eric Alterman

**W**e love Bruce, but does Bruce love us? It's a question that, perhaps unconsciously, haunts every fan and perhaps every performer. There's a moment in the silly, but otherwise pleasant film *Fever Pitch* when Drew Barrymore asks Jimmy Fallon this very question about her betrothed's Red Sox obsession. Fallon's painful reckoning comes when he and his friends are drowning their sorrows in a bar following a play-off loss to the Yankees, and they look up and see Johnny Damon, et al, relaxing and having a nice meal, as if nothing happened. For the fans, it was their life. For the players, it was just a job.

This issue is particularly prickly when it comes to Bruce Springsteen. It's long been a cliché to note that nobody—not even James Brown—works harder on stage to please an audience than Bruce Springsteen. And perhaps J.D. Salinger and a few others are a bit more obsessive in the quest for artistic perfection, but that's a rather exclusive list as well. What's more, Bruce is a famously decent, unpretentious fellow. He used to throw himself into the crowd. He went to that fan's house in St. Louis (not Denver), so the legend goes, after meeting him at the movies. He joined those college students on the balcony of their house to watch John Kerry speak. He doesn't mind if you say hi if you run into him bowling or shopping with the Missus. While all grownups know better—or should know better—than to equate the art with the artist, few would argue against a direct correlation between Bruce's appeal to his most devoted fans and the fact that he doesn't behave like Axl Rose, or even, dare I say it, Bob Dylan.

Still, while I have been accused in both my personal and professional life of being a massive Springsteen suck-up—and I grant by the standards of superstardom, Bruce is also a superstar

of a human being—I've always had a few problems with the guy in the 30 years we've lived together in my heart and mind. So, while I have the floor here, let me start by saying that I don't understand his ticket prices. Why does this mega-millionaire need 85 bucks a piece for his shows from his fans? That's real money to some people, but meaningless change weighing down his pockets to Bruce. (Yes, I know what the Stones, the Eagles, and McCartney, etc., charge, but we're talking about Bruce.) And even as a suck-up, I find the carefully crafted public image to be a bit much. The whole "Steinbeck in Leather" shtick strikes me as simply too good to be true.

But my biggest problem with Springsteen has been that he has always struck me as rather conflicted when it came to his most devoted fans. On the night Bruce played three blocks from my apartment—outside the Museum of Natural History for the MTV awards—the tickets were given out ten at a time to people getting off an apparently randomly chosen PATH train. How many *Backstreets* readers would have loved to see the band, outside in the rain, on Columbus and 81st Street? And speaking of which, as an outsider I have to wonder, what was up with refusing to acknowledge the existence of

this awfully respectful and rather professional magazine for nearly 25 years? Would it have killed the guy to pick up the phone during all those decades and answer a few of the kinds of questions that only fanatics entertain: How did "Angelina" become "Mary"? What is a "hemi-powered drone"? Did you tell Shane to stop moving around like a manic in between "Lucky Town" and "Living Proof"? And why on earth didn't you play "Roulette" at *No Nukes*?

Part of the problem can be attributed to the creepiness of fandom itself. It's weird, and more than a little frightening, I've been told, to have someone know more about you than you do, no matter how respectful they try to be. But still, the kinds of gestures described above would have been so easy, and would have meant so much to so many people. Which is why the way Bruce handled the taping of the *VH1 Storytellers* show was so extraordinary.

The intimate concert at the cozy Two Rivers Theater in Red Bank, NJ was just about everything for which any fan could have hoped. Just 300 or so people sitting in a beautiful new theater, listening to Bruce explaining what he was thinking and feeling when he wrote a bunch of his songs, as if we were in one big

living room. On the one hand, it felt like the most casual evening of our converged lives. He had a techie deliver him his guitar and harmonica in between songs—though he kept forgetting the harmonica. Patti came out and joined him for one song, retiring to the audience afterward to watch him with the rest of us. If you are reading this magazine, you undoubtedly saw the show already (which began airing on April 23) and probably read the "Bruce boards" about the details of the stuff that wasn't broadcast and so I won't go over what Bruce said or did onstage.

Actually, nothing he said or did was over-the-top extraordinary, save for the surprising fact that the lyrics of "Blinded by the Light" actually add up to something, at least in Bruce's interpretation. What was extraordinary—more than extraordinary, really, it was "pinch yourself on the arm to make sure you're not dreaming"—amazing—was the fact that Bruce was doing it at all. He was talking to his fans about how and why he does what he does in a remarkably honest and unguarded fashion. When he talked about writing and rewriting "Thunder Road"—"Angelina" into "Mary"—he would stop and sing a verse or two and holy shit, he sounded just like Bruce Springsteen. The guy talking



KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE PHOTO





about "Thunder Road" was the guy who wrote and sang it—who actually knew the answers to these questions, at least insofar as they were knowable. Who would have dared imagine that? He was

even doing something I would have found unthinkable—he was deconstructing his public image to reveal, for all of us, the flawed and conflicted individual that lies beneath that "Steinbeck in


Leather" fellow who is always gracing the covers of magazines and waxing poetic to Ted Koppel.

The control did not disappear entirely. The questions he took from the audience were chosen in advance. Maybe he knew what they were, I don't know. But he gave them a shot, albeit looking a bit uncomfortable. Even compared to the other "Storytellers" tapings I've attended—Steely Dan, and Johnny Cash and Willie Nelson—it was remarkably open, honest, and often moving.

But here's the beauty part: the people in the audience for this once-in-a-lifetime experience were the diehard fans. Apparently, VH1 was given, an inside source told me, a total of ten tickets. Bruce, or at least someone in Bruceville, decided that *Backstreets* would get to distribute fully half the house. I saw no celebrities there, no "industry insiders," and virtu-

ally no media. It was just us. The screen door opened. Bruce was singing "Thunder Road," but it really seemed like he was saying "Thank you"... to the fanatics.


The room fairly sparkled with excitement, admiration, and yes, dammit, love. Was it mutual? Does it matter?

The first fan question of the night was probably the most telling. Pared down to its core it went something like this: "Bruce, I feel like I know you. Do I?" Bruce answered "no," and I'll take his word for it. Perhaps as fans we're destined to love a man who is not really there. But hell, for two hours on a Monday night in Red Bank, New Jersey, it sure worked for me. 

*Eric Alterman has written six books, one of them about Bruce. It's called *It Ain't No Sin to be Glad You're Alive*, and you can buy it in paperback.*

ORCHESTRA  
Row C Seat 102

VH1 STORYTELLERS:  
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN  
Monday, April 4, 2005  
Doors Open 6:30 pm  
Doors Close 7:45 pm  
Television Taping 8:00 pm



TWO RIVERS THEATRE COMPANY  
21 Bridge Avenue  
Red Bank, NJ 07701

Adult Only  
No minors  
No large bags, backpacks or luggage will be permitted  
All attendees are subject to random security searches

Adult One  
Non-refundable  
Two Rivers Theatre  
ORCHESTRA  
Row C Seat 102

## VH1 STORYTELLERS TAPING Two Rivers Theatre, Red Bank, NJ April 4, 2005

TWO YEARS AGO, BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN held a pair of "Master Class"-style shows in Somerville, MA, offering glimpses into his songwriting craft, explicating songs line-by-line, and even taking questions from the audience. While a stunning change of pace from the recent E Street Band shows, very few fans actually got to witness those performances (and only after paying big bucks)—and by the time the Q&A session bit the dust on the second night, one kinda had the feeling that it'd never happen again.

On April 4, 2005, at an intimate taping for future broadcast on VH1 *Storytellers*, Bruce took another swing—and knocked it out of the park. No steroids necessary. For well over two hours, while cameras rolled, Springsteen regaled the awe-struck shoebox-sized room with performances and discussions of songs from *Devils & Dust*, *The Rising*, *Nebraska*, *Greetings, Tunnel*, and *Born to Run*; the setlist selection, as he revealed during the Q&A, was driven by a desire to showcase the different types, styles, and moods of his songs from each stage of his career. He gave premiere performances of two new tracks from the forthcoming *Devils & Dust*—the title track on acoustic guitar, and "Jesus Was an Only Son" at the piano. A devastatingly beautiful acoustic arrangement of "The Rising" brought a standing ovation both times it was performed (a second time through was required due to technical difficulties; other songs Bruce tried a second take of "because they told me I could"). Patti Scialfa joined him for a "Brilliant Disguise" duet, nailed in one take.


Springsteen's vision of the evening was beyond the usual scope of *Storytellers*, stretching out the night with not only candid stories but also Somerville-like line-by-line readings of his songs, stopping to explain his intent along the way. These ranged from enlightening to gut-busting to ambiguous; at times his explanations were more beguiling than the lyrics themselves. Even so, it felt as rare and entrancing as a magician slowing down his act to show you how a trick works—and you still can't figure out how the hell he did it.

As later broadcast, those explicated run-throughs would often be edited to become voiceovers during Springsteen's performance, or shown, as in

the case of "The Rising," in lieu of the performance itself. Editing frustrations and lost, cherished moments aside, the producers of *Storytellers* did a remarkable if unenviable job of compressing the show into an hour; of the songs played, only "Nebraska" would remain unaired. For that song, Springsteen named the film *Night of the Hunter* as an influence, discussed the fact that his narrator was speaking from the beyond, and suggested that this song about a killer still should resonate on a universal level: "every-one knows what it's like to be condemned."

"Waitin' on a Sunny Day," featuring a knock-out Smokey Robinson impression and the only audience participation until the Q&A, had originally been planned as the set-closer. Springsteen smartly moved it to the middle and instead ended the musical portion with true magic in the night: "Thunder Road." At the piano. Twice. And a third time through to try and show how the rabbit came out of the hat. There was no topping that.

Before calling it a night, however, Springsteen came downstage for a little back-and-forth. One after another, ten fans in the audience had a chance to ask Bruce their "one question," selected by VH1 from among the *Backstreets* contest winners. While Springsteen seemed a bit tired, this was where Somerville 2 spiraled downward into inanity; not tonight. He did offer to come out and smack one guy around... but only because he was asking if Bruce ever wanted to "get all Johnny Rotten" on somebody to shake up his nice-guy image [see "Letters," page 4]. If there was a downside, it was that Springsteen's set had been so long and heavy on the revealing banter, a fair amount of the Q&A wound up treading on recently familiar ground. But if Bruce wanted an audience to be "in concert" with him, it'd be hard to think of a better example.

Finally, he raised his guitar, gave a benediction, and left the stage. Persistent cheering and foot-stomping couldn't bring him back; eventually, VH1's Bill Flanagan came out to tell us that was it, Bruce was "on a respirator." Out in the crowd, after a check of the watch and the gradual sinking-in of what we'd just witnessed, it became pretty clear that he'd earned some breathing room. 

—Christopher Phillips

DEVILS AND DUST  
BLINDED BY THE LIGHT  
BRILLIANT DISGUISE  
NEBRASKA  
JESUS WAS ONLY SON P  
RISING  
THUNDER ROAD P  
SUNNY DAY

**Devils & Dust / Blinded By the Light / Brilliant Disguise (with Patti Scialfa) / Nebraska [x2] / Jesus Was an Only Son (piano) [x2] / Waitin' on a Sunny Day / The Rising [x2] / Thunder Road (piano) [x2]**



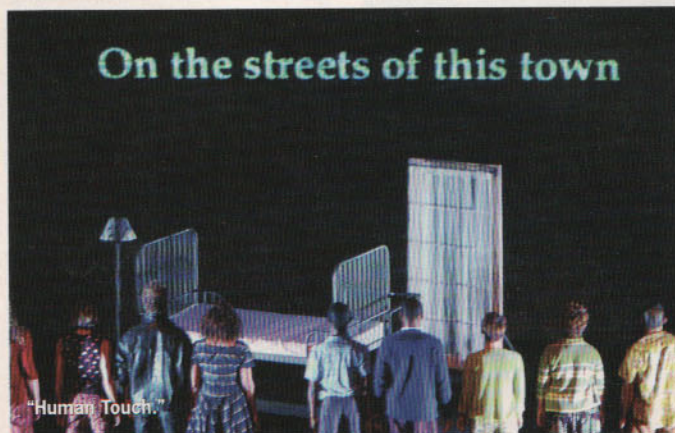
Got the heart of a ballerina

## Anytown: Stories of America

By Colleen Sheehy

One of the most telling gestures in the new dance work *Anytown: Stories of America*, set to the music of Bruce Springsteen, Patti Scialfa, and Soozie Tyrell, comes at the end of "The Big Muddy," when two men yearn for the same woman. As the woman, exquisitely danced by Toni Pierce-Sands, moves away from one lover, he kneels on the floor, cupping her bare heels in his hands as she walks away. That small gesture speaks beautifully of the mix of desire, care, and loss expressed at that moment and also of *Anytown's* larger themes concerning both the fragility and endurance of human relationships.

Thoughtful, expressive details such as this, combined with a leap of faith in experimenting with choreographing to pop music are hallmarks of *Anytown*. Other choreographers have tried—Twyla Tharp doing Billy Joel; Joffrey Ballet dancing to music by Prince—with mixed results. Lucky for Springsteen fans and



for contemporary dance enthusiasts, Shapiro & Smith Dance has finessed the dance/pop relationship in *Anytown*. Choreographers Danial Shapiro and Joanie Smith have created a beautifully moving and satisfying work of art, using the trio's songs like chapters in a dreamlike story. The selection and sequencing of the music, combined with inventive choreography and impressive performances by the dance troupe, deepen our understanding of the music, emphasizing

thematic relationships among the three songwriters as solo artists rather than as members of the E Street Band.

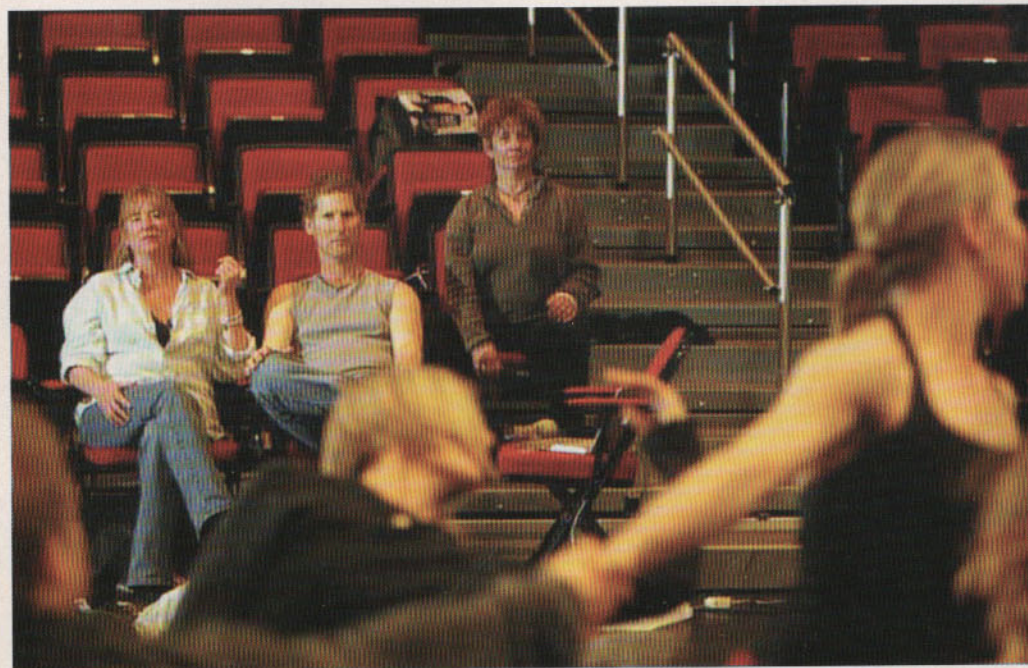
*Anytown* has a remarkable backstory—this is not just any dance company deciding to use Springsteen's music. Joanie Smith is Soozie Tyrell's sister. In the mid-1980s, when Tyrell was busking on the streets of New York with best friend Patti Scialfa, they sometimes ended the day at Smith's Chelsea apartment, where they would relax together

and share performances. Patti and Soozie would play and sing, then Joanie and boyfriend Danial Shapiro would dance. They imagined working together some day on a collaborative project. But life circumstances sent them in different directions.

Smith and Shapiro left New York in 1985, having worked with major dance companies there, and eventually settled in Minneapolis, where Smith now holds an endowed chair in the Dance Program at the University of Minnesota. The thriving Twin Cities dance scene with its strong audiences and funders supported their company, Shapiro & Smith Dance, founded in 1986. Since then, they have earned an international reputation for performances of breathtaking physicality, emotional depth, and wit—dance and dramatic theater.

In 2002, when Shapiro faced a life-threatening illness, he and Smith decided to focus their time and energy on what they had dreamed about in Chelsea. They talked with Tyrell and then Scialfa about using their music in a dance work. Patti put in a request to Bruce, who readily agreed to make his music available to them.

*Anytown* opens with a lively fiddle overture by Tyrell, signaling that the setting could be just about any American town and just about any time period, though the choreographers think of it as a compression of 1930s America and the present. The dance then launches into the first "movement," set to Springsteen's "Human Touch." For this piece, the entire Shapiro & Smith ensemble—dancers of various ages, ethnicities, and body types—share the stage. They slip among each other, sometimes dancing in unison, sometimes apart, one occasionally caresses another, grabs an arm, slaps a back, or offers a hand to lift another up. This opening act introduces the townspeople,



Soozie Tyrell, Danial Shapiro, and Joanie Smith (seated, L-R) and dancers Kelly Drummond-Cawthon and Laura Selle rehearsing the piece set to Tyrell's "Ste. Genevieve."

VICTOR PAUL VIRTUCCIO PHOTOS



whose oblique stories unfold in the subsequent songs.

Fourteen songs make up *Anytown*. From "Human Touch" the piece moves into a new work by Tyrell, "Square Dance," featuring a smaller group performing a funny vignette of a family arguing around the dinner table. Scialfa's songs are taken from both *23rd Street Lullaby* ("Young in the City," "City Boys") and *Rumble Doll* ("Big Black Heaven"). Tyrell's title song from her *White Lines* CD is featured as well as "Ste. Genevieve," "Little Girl," and "ferdouganal." Excited about this project, which she and Scialfa saw in a workshop version in summer 2003, Tyrell wrote new music for *Anytown*. Besides the fiddle instrumental, "Square Dance," she wrote a series of fiddle pieces used as transitions between acts.

*Anytown* features an interesting mix of Springsteen's songs from different points in his career. After "Human Touch," "Youngstown" falls about midway through the work, followed by "The Big Muddy," "Ain't Got You," and "Countin' on a Miracle" (the acoustic performance from *The Essential Bruce Springsteen*, rather than the full band Rising version). The final song is the acoustic blues version of "Born in the U.S.A."

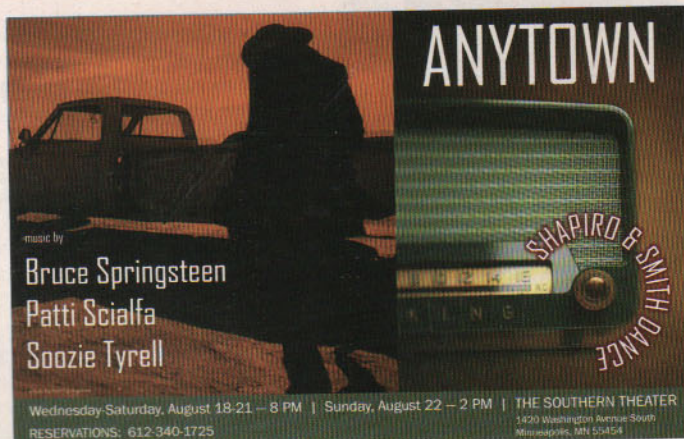
Commenting on how the piece evolved, Shapiro says that they immersed themselves in the music, listening over and over to Springsteen's work as well as Tyrell's *White Lines* and Scialfa's two releases. They also attended many concerts on *The Rising* tour in 2002 and 2003. They looked

for songs that "resonated" and slowly began to build a collection of songs they felt intersected with each other. Their first choice was Tyrell's "ferdouganal." The song's marching structure conveys feelings of strength and resilience, and the solo dance to this piece, performed by Kelly Drummond Cawthon, is muscular and stark, powerful yet vulnerable. "Youngstown" from *Tom Joad* was another early choice, to which Shapiro choreographed a duet for two male dancers.

Trusting the abilities of their troupe, Shapiro & Smith developed the movements organically from the sensibilities of each song rather than from the storyline of the lyrics. The choreographers directed the dancers but also let them craft their own responses. Then they sequenced the songs to tell a layered story about human connections and frailties, love and loss, about people constrained by their hometown while also buoyed by meeting life's trials as a community. Speaking of their approach to choreographing to the songs, Shapiro says, "You can't be explicit in dance." Instead *Anytown* presents a poetic response to the music, telling a story "in peripheral vision," as Shapiro puts it.

Each song or movement exists as a separate piece, but together they follow a dramatic arc, at times poignant, humorous, mournful, or defiant. By the end of the closing song, "Born in the U.S.A.," with the entire ensemble again dancing together, the work feels satisfyingly complex and complete.

The dance to Scialfa's "City



**ANYTOWN**

music by  
**Bruce Springsteen**  
**Patti Scialfa**  
**Soozie Tyrell**

SHAPIRO & SMITH DANCE

Wednesday-Saturday, August 18-21 — 8 PM | Sunday, August 22 — 2 PM | THE SOUTHERN THEATER  
1420 Washington Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55454  
RESERVATIONS: 612-340-1725

## Anytown, U.S.A.— 2005-2006 Tour

<b>Oct. 6-8, 2005</b>	Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, Phila., PA
<b>Oct. 13</b>	Performing Arts Center, Tampa Bay, FL
<b>Oct. 15</b>	University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
<b>Oct. 29</b>	Count Basie Theater, Red Bank, NJ
<b>Jan. 24-29, 2006</b>	Joyce Theater, New York, NY
<b>Mar. 3</b>	Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN
<b>Mar. 18</b>	Community Theatre, Morristown, NJ
<b>Mar. 23</b>	Duke University, Durham, NC
<b>Mar. 24-25</b>	Thalian Hall, Wilmington, NC
<b>Mar. 28-29</b>	Diana Wortham Theater, Asheville, NC
<b>Mar. 31</b>	Appalachian State University, Boone, NC
<b>Apr. 4-5</b>	Cal Poly Tech, San Luis Obispo, CA

Boys" is a real audience-pleaser. While the lyrics sing the praises of boys, female dancer Jamie Ryan performs a fluid, sexy, club-style dance to this sensual, country-blues number from *23rd Street Lullaby*, making it all about women and the pleasures of movement and flirtation. The two male dancers—Carl Fink and Eddie Oroyan—can't keep up with Ryan, as she plays to the audience more than to them.

Laura Selle's performance to Tyrell's "White Lines" is a tour de force of athletic and emotional dance. The song begins quietly, with Selle and two other dancers—her sisters in the song—sitting on a couch, watching television, their feet keeping time with the music. As the song goes on, telling of the singer's restless urge to escape down the white lines of the highway, Selle bursts across the stage. Her flying leaps, flailing arms, legs, and hair move to the song's wild fiddle line rather than to the song's lyrical or rhythmic structure. Her antic movements embody the song's searching desperation, Tyrell's equivalent of "Born to Run." Dancer and audience are breathless by the end of it.

For audience members who know the music well, *Anytown* offers a new way to listen to it. The dance stories don't match the lyrics directly, and that elusiveness makes the union of song and dance more enjoyable. Paying attention to the structure and subtleties of the performance while also attending to the music offers a stimulating challenge. And it makes watching more than one performance of *Anytown* well worth the time.

Shapiro feels gratified by the positive audience response and the strong critical reviews for *Anytown*'s preview performances in Minneapolis in August 2004. Yet the dance itself is the biggest thrill. He says, "The best part is standing on the stage at the beginning during 'Human Touch' and thinking, 'I can't believe we're doing this.'"

The dance group will take *Anytown* on the road in fall 2005, touring to the Eastern U.S. and further afield well into 2006 (see schedule above). For more information about bookings and tour schedule, contact Laura Colby at (718) 797-4577. More information is available at their website, [shapiroandsmithdance.org](http://shapiroandsmithdance.org).



VICTOR PAUL VIRTUCIO PHOTO



## The Indian Writer

# Tennessee Meets Nebraska

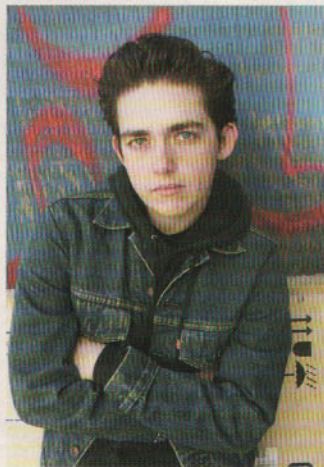
By Roderick Jones

**N**ebraska enthusiasts won't have any trouble recognizing the characters in *Deliver Me From Nowhere*, a new short story collection by Tennessee Jones. The book, Jones' first, has ten stories, each one inspired by a different song from Springsteen's 1982 release. The lyrics serve as a point of departure for Jones, who sometimes keeps the plots and perspectives of the original works, but otherwise takes the Boss' raw material and recasts it with new settings or different sources of conflict. In "Highway Patrolman," Frank goes off to pursue country music stardom instead of the Viet Cong, and the tension between the brothers emanates from their shared complicity in a hate crime. The story based on the album's title track begins, "I was standing on my front lawn the first time I saw him," and goes on to revisit the killing spree from the point of view of the girl who went along for the ride.

*Backstreets* talked with Jones by phone a few days before he left New York for a national tour to promote the book.

***Backstreets:*** What is it about Nebraska that distinguished it from other Springsteen albums and moved you to write the book?

TJ: I think with a lot of his earlier stuff there's tons of narrative, it's very wordy, and he's trying to cram as much story into the lyrics as he possibly can. I've always really loved how Springsteen's work is really based in narrative, and how some of his stuff—like on *Born to Run* especially—is very cinematic. The thing that really struck me about the *Nebraska* record is that whenever I listen to it, it's very apparent to me that the album was influenced as much by literature as by movies or music, or the things he was seeing in his life or the stories that he'd heard. I actually did consider doing this idea with



one of the other records, but the *Nebraska* record seemed like it was one that was ripe for expanding in a literary format. That's the primary reason. The other reason is that the themes that the record explores are very poignant to me and are things that I really wanted to write about.

***Did you have the idea of an entire book from the start, or did you write one or two stories and then decide, why not go for all ten?***

I had the idea to cover the whole record. Basically, I pitched it to the publisher, and he said, "That sounds great to me." So I had the idea, and then I got the go-ahead to write it.

***Was there a model for this project? I mean, is there another book out there that was inspired by rock 'n' roll or a particular album?***

I don't know of anything else—not to say that there's nothing out there. There actually is a book of poetry that is based on the first six Queen records, and it has a poem for each song on each record. It's called *God Save My Queen*. I saw that, and that kind of put the seed in my brain to think about covering a whole record with short stories.

***One thing I found striking in the stories was the sense of setting. I was wondering if you did any traveling to certain places, or did the atmospheric details just***

***spring forth from your memory and imagination?***

I did take a trip. I started writing the book about three years ago, but before I really started working on anything other than just real rough sketches of the stories, I went on a month-long trip out to the Midwest and West with a friend of mine. We were just in a truck, and we were camping out every night. So we were going down the smallest back roads that you could possibly imagine. Like, off the map, you know. I tried to take in as much of the landscape as I could and put it into this book.

***Any places in particular from that trip that impacted the book?***

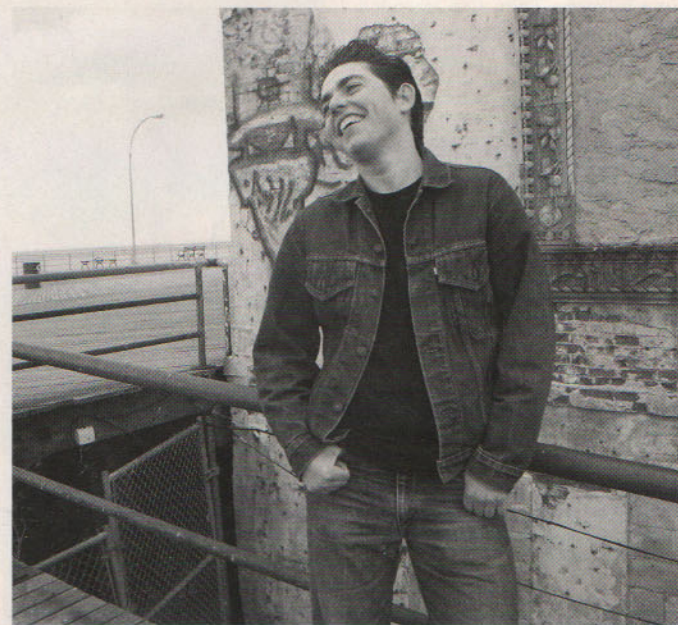
Yeah, there are places in Kansas and Nebraska. We were driving on really tiny farm roads through the middle of wheat fields, through the middle of plains, through the middle of corn, and we'd come across a little community of, like, six houses out in the middle of nowhere. And you'd wonder, where do these people get their groceries? Where do their kids go to school? How much interaction do they have with the world around them when the nearest gas sta-

tion is 50 or 60 miles away? There were instances like that, when I was just interested in how people lived in that sort of environment.

Then there were times when purely the landscape would be very influential. If you've ever been to the canyonlands out in Utah, it's where the Green and Colorado Rivers meet. You can stand at certain points and look a hundred miles in the distance and see all these canyons that have been carved out. There's a point where you can stand and look down a sheer thousand-foot drop. That seemed to me like the perfect metaphor, as far as landscape goes, for some of the things I wanted to talk about.

***Different from where you grew up, right?***

Yeah, I grew up in the northeast part of Tennessee in the Appalachian mountains, and of course they're very old and rounded. Everything is extremely green in the summertime. In the Midwest and out west it's very different. There is one story in the book, the one for "Highway Patrolman" [that takes place in Appalachia]. It's not stated in the story, but in my mind it's set where I grew up.





*I want to ask you about that story, and also about "My Father's House." I thought those stories were somewhat different from the songs in unexpected ways. With those two, what did you start with? Was it a lyric, or an image in your mind, or maybe a story that you wanted to tell, and the characters were there in the song?*

That's a really good question. For "My Father's House," the image in the song where he's talking about coming back and

knocking on the door, and his father has moved away—that was a really salient image for me. And also the feeling of mournfulness that's in that song. I wanted that to somehow come across by describing the landscape that I do in that story. I tried to make the entire story sort of mournful and forlorn.

With "Highway Patrolman," I initially started that trying to stick real, real close to the song. And it just wasn't working for me. I wouldn't let myself go see that movie, *Indian Runner* [laughs]. I thought if I did, it's just going to be all over [laughs]. So I actually had a lot of trouble with it, and it was one of the last stories that I completed. My editor was like, why are you having so much trouble with this? I was trying to set it in Michigan, and she advised me to try and write this story in a place that I know. So that's when I started seeing all these different places from my hometown. The whole deep, dark thing that his brother does that is so terrible, initially that thing was that he rapes a woman and his brother knows about it, and he always carries that with him. But then I remembered this rumor from when I was in high school—I still don't know if it's true or not—about a fellow who was gay, and these guys in the locker room brought out a noose and were threatening to hang him. I realized I wanted to say something about homophobia in rural areas because it was so

pervasive when I was growing up. That's how that story came about. It was really difficult to write.

*Did you feel at all circumscribed or inhibited creatively by the song lyrics?*

I did at first. The way I first started sketching the stories was that I had the album cover and I was looking at the lyrics and writing down lyrics that stuck out in my head as focal points. I

was having a great deal of trouble with some of it. Once again, my editor said to me, you're writing a book of stories and you need to let the stories go wherever they want to go. Once I did that, things got a lot easier. And once I started to stay true to what I

thought was the essence of the story of the song, it was much easier.

*So other than that initial writing of the lyrics, did you have any interaction with the music at all as you were writing?*

I would always listen to the record. I listened to it so many times [laughs]. There's the essence of the song that resides in the lyrics, and there's the essence that resides in the music itself. So listening to the record helped me sort of parse those things out.

*In reading your book and going back and listening to the music as well, it occurred to me that one could say of Nebraska that it romanticizes horrible crimes. Looking at the news just over the past couple of weeks, with someone killing a federal judge's family in Chicago, and the person in Georgia going on a rampage, I wondered what your response would be to someone saying that this album glorifies violence?*

I've thought about it a lot, actually. The story "Nebraska" was the first story I wrote because I said to myself, this is going to be the most difficult story for me. I

know what happened, in terms of what the song is based on. I thought to myself, if I can figure out a way to deal with this, then I should have no problem writing the rest of this book. I thought about what it would be like for the family members of the people that Charles Starkweather killed—what would they think if they read this story.

With "Johnny 99," I tried to give as much emotional landscape [as possible] so as not to romanticize things. With the song itself, the whole point of view is Ralph's. It's his mom standing up in the courtroom. With "Johnny 99" I wanted, at the end, to show the family of the woman that he killed in the courtroom, if only for a second.

Going back to "Nebraska," one of the main reasons that I wanted to make it about her and not about the male character was because I wanted to try to show a lot of different complicated feelings about what was going on and what led up to it. One of the themes that runs throughout the record and almost every song is people coming to a point in their lives where they're no longer able to deal with what's on their plate. The way I envision it is, they're faced with stepping off the edge of a cliff and seeing what will happen next. To me, that's what's happening with a lot of the characters on that record. It's a good question, though. When I read about what happened in Atlanta, I thought, wow, this is a Bruce Springsteen song. A terrible, terrible thing.

*You're a Springsteen fan, right? Yeah, I'm a really big fan.*

*Tell me your origin story – how did it all begin for you?*

I'm 26 years old. When I was a teenager and up into my early 20s, I was a punk. My attitude was like, this sucks. You know, this mainstream, kind of huge music [laughs]. When I was growing up, Springsteen to me was the "Born in the U.S.A." guy. I moved out of my parents' house when I was 18, and I moved up to Richmond, Virginia. My roommate there was a record collector, and he had 500 or 600 records. I showed him some of my writing, and he said, "Oh you have to listen to this!" And he played me *Born to Run*. That was it. ➡

# THE BOOKS

By Christopher Phillips

With the number of Springsteen-related books being published this spring and summer, it would be a logical assumption to think that publishers are shrewdly riding the wave of a new album and tour. "Strike while the iron is hot," as the saying goes. But *Devils & Dust* was announced so late in the game, it was really just a stroke of luck; the majority of these new and upcoming arrivals were already in the pipeline before anyone had an inkling that Springsteen would be returning to the stage so soon. In addition to Tennessee Jones' *Deliver Me From Nowhere*, here's a bevy of new Bruce books, just in time for Boss Time.

## OUT NOW

Peter Basham's **BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: THE POCKET ESSENTIAL GUIDE (Pocket Essentials, \$8.99)**, is touted as "Almost everything you need to know in one essential guide." "Almost" is a key modifier here—and for any dedicated fan, "everything you already know" would be even more accurate. While

this entry-level guide may not be enlightening to many *Backstreets* readers, it's likely not meant to be. It could, however, serve

as a decent primer for the newly indoctrinated (or a quick refresher course for those with patchy memories). This 160-page mass market paperback offers a history of Springsteen's career through a chronological look at his output from *Greetings through Essential*. In addition to credits and track listings, Basham lists "Highlights," "Weak Spots," and "Key Missing Tracks" along the way. Also included are the requisite appendices running down

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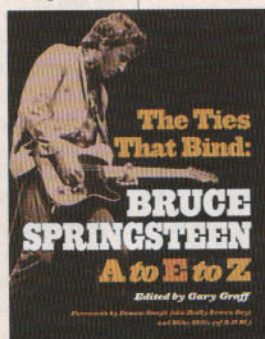




related artists, tribute albums, E Street bios and more.

A more exhaustive guide, with a size more suitable to its subject, **THE TIES THAT BIND: BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN A TO E TO Z** (Visible Ink Press, \$24.95) definitely won't fit in your pocket.

Edited by Gary Graff, this tome pushes 600 pages, packed with encyclopedic entries illuminating the life and career of the Boss—the first of its kind. A longtime Detroit music journalist and founding editor of Visible Ink's *MusicHound* series of album guides, Graff credits the publishing house with spurring his first book on Springsteen. "I always knew there was a Bruce Springsteen book in my future," he tells *Backstreets*, "but that became particularly evident after I became associated with Visible Ink Press and staffers—particularly Marty Connors (who



now co-owns the imprint) and Terri Schell, who project-managed *The Ties That Bind*. It's a rare company that runs on Bruce time—and whose executives are sometimes out of pocket because they're on the road chasing after Springsteen shows.

"We went with the A to Z—or, in this case, A to E to Z—format because that's the book that isn't out there," Graff explains. "There are plenty of profiles, sociological studies, picture books, quote compendiums. But there isn't a comprehensive encyclopedia-style book that pulls all these strings together and creates a reference guide to all things Springstenia. There aren't many artists you can do that with; it requires not only a long and multi-faceted career, but also a kind of mythology, self-generated or otherwise, that makes even peripheral aspects of their lives worthy of attention.

Springsteen is one of the few whose universe really reaches beyond the music and into the adjunct people, places and events that are part of his story."

To help tell that story, Graff, a contributor to this magazine, tapped a number of fellow *Backstreets* scribes, along with music journalists such as Steve Knopper and Lynn Margolis, to write entries; Damon Gough (Badly Drawn Boy) and Mike Mills (R.E.M.) contributed forewords. As with most projects of this magnitude you'll find some errors and inconsistencies (which Visible Ink is working to correct, as the book enters its second printing after only a month), but you won't find a more rich, thorough collection of Springsteen knowledge and trivia under one cover. "What was interesting for me—and perhaps a bit alarming," Graff adds, "was that I found I knew all this stuff as we were gather-

ing the information and preparing the book; there were things I had forgotten about but quickly recalled as we researched. It was a great deal of fun, and the temptation, of course, was to continue on for as long as the bootlegs lasted—which, as we all know would be a very long time."

While *The Ties That Bind* contains a pretty indispensable wealth of knowledge, it probably won't make you think about Springsteen's work in a different way—that's simply not in the nature of an encyclopedia. You might not expect any fresh insight from a book that offers, "Write songs like Bruce Springsteen!" either. Surprisingly, **SONGWRITING SECRETS: BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN** (Backbeat Books, \$19.95), by Rikky Rooksby, delivers on that score. The author examines every aspect of Springsteen's craft, from song structure to arrange-



## CLEVELAND, OH JULY 9, 1984

Just back from covering the opening of the Jacksons' *Victory* tour in Kansas City, I get a call from promoter (and friend) Phil Ober, then with Belkin Productions, suggesting we sky down to Cleveland to check out the just-started *Born in the U.S.A.* tour. Ready for something a bit more down-to-earth than the Jacksons' extravaganza, I agreed and witnessed a charged performance that had all the earmarks of something about to blow up in a big way. Thanks, Phil.

## DETROIT, MI MARCH 29, 1988

While Springsteen has often used sex as shtick in his shows, the second of two *Tunnel of Love* concerts at Joe Louis Arena had—besides one of the tour's best set lists—a pronounced, unusually lusty quality. It was downright hot, in fact, which was commented on by many of Bruce's female fans that night. Too bad I was there with... my editor.

## TORONTO, ON SEPTEMBER 15, 1988

A concentrated dose of Bruce and the E Street Band in one of only two arena stops on the Amnesty International Human Rights Now! tour. Short but extremely sweet. Sting sounded great on "The River," and Bruce grabbing a male dance partner for "Dancing in the Dark" was entertainingly refreshing.

## EAST RUTHERFORD, NJ AUGUST 2, 1992

A quick trip to the Springsteen motherland to advance a pair of upcoming concerts in Detroit—which had plenty of tickets left. Bruce was aware of this, enough so that toward the end of the first half of the show a couple of reporters were beckoned to side stage and then ushered back to his dressing room for a quick intermission chat. The capper was returning to my seat and having those sitting around me grumble, "So that's why [the intermission] is taking so long."

## AUBURN HILLS, MI AUGUST 18, 1992

During the encore of the second of his two Detroit area shows, Bruce points into the crowd, at Bob Seger's manager Ed "Punch" Andrews, and announces "This is for the guy in the blue shirt over there," leading the band into a ragged but spirited rendition of Seger's "Rambling Gamblin' Man."

## ROSEMONT, IL DECEMBER 3, 1995

Bruce again greets reporters in his dressing room, this time after the solo acoustic show early in the tour. Trying to be a proper host, he asks, "Is there any beer or anything? What...they didn't give us any beer? Well, you're welcome to some of that Jack Daniels,"

he said, pointing towards a mostly empty bottle on the counter. Eric Dwyer, the artist whose painting adorns *The Ghost of Tom Joad* cover, was hanging around, and filmmaker Peter Bogdanovich dropped in at one point with his daughter and a friend. As Bruce accurately noted at the time, "Whoa, big excitement!"

## DETROIT, MI JANUARY 10-11, 1996

Many of the themes of *The Ghost of Tom Joad* were appropriate for these two Fox Theatre gigs, which came in the midst of a bitter Detroit newspaper strike that started six months earlier. This was not lost on Springsteen, who donated proceeds from both nights' souvenir sales to the strike relief fund and spoke eloquently about the situation from the stage. As one of the strikers, it may have been my proudest, and certainly most appreciative, moment as a Bruce fan.

## DETROIT, MI SEPTEMBER 21, 2003

For many it was a pre-birthday show that featured a guest appearance by Motown great Martha Reeves for an encore version of "Heat Wave." But those looking closely spotted an ebullient Bob Seger and his family watching his friend from the side of the stage, a warm moment of low-key camaraderie between colleagues.

## MOTOR CITY MADNESS

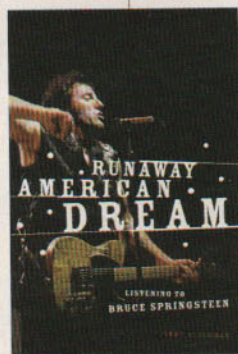
The *Ties That Bind* editor Gary Graff names some favorite moments in his 25 years of covering Bruce Springsteen



ments, chord progressions, dynamics, melodies, and lyrics. Ostensibly written for songwriters—and there are times when non-musicians may not quite get the nuances of, say, a suspended chord or an inversion—*Songwriting Secrets* has plenty of fodder for the layfan, and it goes deep. What makes Springsteen sound “rakish as a funk Sinatra” on “Kitty’s Back”? What keeps the seven-minute “The Fever” from getting monotonous? See “Accented chords,” page 77.

## UP AROUND THE BEND

Due in July is Jimmy Guterman’s **RUNAWAY AMERICAN DREAM: LISTENING TO BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN** (Da Capo, \$15.95), another refreshing addition to the Boss book-



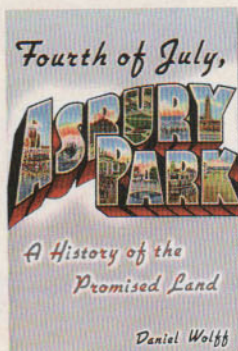
shelf. Not a bio, not a guide, but a series of seven essays that focus on Springsteen’s music with wit and insight. They’re personal essays, sure, but with the musical and historical context and perspective that keeps them from reading like diary entries, or worse, testimonials. (If you’ve read *The Worst Rock ‘n’ Roll Records* of all time, which Guterman co-wrote with Owen O’Donnell, you’ll have some idea of the voice here.)

Guterman tells *Backstreets*, “I recognize that the world needs a new book about Springsteen almost as much as it needs another *Matrix* sequel, but *Runaway American Dream* seeks to chew over the questions we Bruce nuts have been asking one another for decades. Among other things, it defends the Arthur Baker 12-inch remixes, includes references to both Marcel Proust and the Contrasts, begs Springsteen never to play ‘Mary’s Place’ again, compares Bob Dylan to Grandpa Simpson, suggests why some unreleased songs deserve to remain unreleased, and includes a scene in which Sam Phillips tells me that everything I know is wrong. It’s also, to my limited knowledge, the only book about Springsteen in which the author almost kills Max Weinberg by accident.”

Daniel Wolff’s **FOURTH OF JULY, ASBURY PARK: A HISTORY OF THE PROMISED LAND** (Bloomsbury, \$24.95) is due, when else, on July 4. While Gary Wien’s recent *Beyond the Palace* focused on the area’s music scene from the latter part of the 20th Century, *Fourth of July* takes a broader look at the 130-year history of the city by the sea. Wolff, author of *You Send Me: The Life and Times of Sam Cooke*, follows Asbury from its early days as a model religious community through its recent struggles as a city of ruins, with all the recreation and racism along the way. The musical history is inter-

twined here, too, including interviews with Springsteen and Steven Van Zandt. Jonathan Demme writes, “Gossipy, juicy with amazing characters, rich with American music in general and Bruce Springsteen in particular, *Fourth of July, Asbury Park* is both an entertaining and deeply disturbing illumination of the history and social dynamics of these United States.” Dave Marsh calls it “unflinching, artful, and indispensable.”

Publishing the same day—just in time for beach reading, not to mention the 30th anniversary of *Born to Run* later in the summer—is **MEETING ACROSS THE RIVER** (Bloomsbury, \$14.95). And if *Deliver Me From Nowhere* takes an unusual departure point for a book of short stories, this long-awaited collection goes a step further: every story in this original anthology was inspired by the one song. Edited by Jessica Kaye and Richard J. Brewer, *Meeting* features noted mystery and crime fiction writers all riffing on that tale from *Born to Run* of Eddie and his pal and the “meeting with a man on the other side.” Contributors include Eric Garcia, C. J. Box, Barbara Seranella, David Corbett, Gregg Hurwitz, and Steve Hamilton, all with a different take on how the big score goes down.

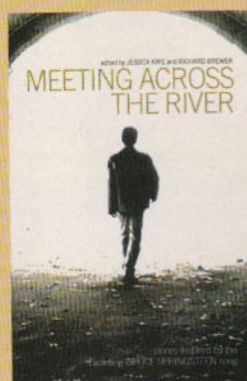


title to its line-up. **BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN’S BORN IN THE**

Later in 2005, the fantastically obsessive “Thirty-Three and a Third” series of books—each of which focuses on a single acclaimed album, from James Brown’s *Live at the Apollo* to The Replacements’ *Let It Be*—finally adds a Springsteen

**U.S.A. (Continuum, \$9.95)**, by Geoffrey Himes, is due in September. Series editor David Barker notes that Himes is “of the unusual opinion that *Born in the U.S.A.* is Bruce’s best album. Himes makes a pretty convincing case in his book that Springsteen’s finest work blends comedy and tragedy, and cuts back a little on the earnestness. The book is also a remarkable testament to just how prolific Springsteen was, as a writer, during the early ‘80s.” Visit [33third.blogspot.com](http://33third.blogspot.com) to stay up to date on the series. ☞

## I WASN'T JUST TALKIN'



Meeting Across the River editor Jessica Kaye on the genesis of the forthcoming story collection:

**M**ore than a few years ago, I tried my hand at writing a comic novel. I loved the premise, but I got fewer than 20 pages in before I was stumped at how to continue. As I stared at my computer screen, I thought, “I really want to read this book! I want it to be finished!” So I began daydreaming about giving the book to someone else to finish, so I could read it. I thought, Nora Ephron could finish this and make it funny. But it would be an entirely different book if another writer finished it. Think what Stephen King would do with it! Or Steve Martin! The list was endless, and each author’s unique talents would bring a different story to bear on my basic premise.

From this was born the germ of an idea—to give the same source material to numerous writers, to see what they do with it. And of course I was keeping my own story line to myself, for the improbable day that I returned to the computer to finish it, so I began to think of what else we could use. From somewhere in the back of my brain came “Meeting Across the River,” because although the song seems to tell a story, the more you listen to it the more you realize that it is what is untold that imbues the song with its richness. We don’t know much about our protagonist—not even his name. We just know that he is in trouble with his girlfriend, seems to be skirting the law (at a minimum), but has a chance at a big score that, with his buddy Eddie’s help, could change everything—or risk everything. That’s a lot in a short song! And the music matches the words perfectly. If that’s not inherent talent in a young songwriter, I don’t know what is.

As for getting the writers, that’s where I roped in Richard Brewer as my co-editor, because at the time he was the assistant manager of Mystery Bookstore in Los Angeles, and so I thought he and I knew entirely different sets of authors (I had owned an audiobook publishing company and so I knew lots of authors from that experience). Our original plan was to have authors from across a number of genres—mystery, humor, romance—to get as broad a spectrum of stories as possible. But in fact, nearly all the stories ended up being noir, and that’s because the source material really lends itself to that. We do have a couple of stories which just make me laugh out loud, though; Peter David’s is funny, and Eric Garcia’s is really clever.

It was a difficult process to get 18 or 20 writers. It takes time. Although a few of the writers not only said yes but even penned stories before we had a publisher!

—as told to Christopher Phillips



## The Backstreets Interview

# JOHN FOGERTY

By Robert S. Bader

**R**eviewing John Fogerty's current tour, *Variety* wrote, "Like many forces of nature, John Fogerty only emerges once in a blue moon and leaves an impression on everything he touches." While it's certainly been true that Fogerty the solo artist has made only sporadic appearances, he wasn't always so scarce. As the leader of Creedence Clearwater Revival, Fogerty was one of rock 'n' roll's most prolific hit makers. The band's first five albums—and a string of top ten singles—were all released within a two-year period. But Fogerty's first five solo albums span a 24-year period that includes a couple of decade-long gaps between releases.

Recent activity suggests that the gaps are getting shorter. In fact, the seven years since the release of his last studio album have seen Fogerty tour three times and release a live album and video. So he hasn't exactly been hiding for seven years. But whatever he does, his album releases tend to be greeted as comebacks—and 2004 was yet another comeback year for John Fogerty. The release in September of *Déjà Vu All Over Again*, his first studio album

since 1997's Grammy-winning *Blue Moon Swamp*, came shortly after he began his first tour since a brief summer outing in 2000. Soon after the album's release, John hit the road with Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band as part of the Vote for Change tour, during a break from his own tour.

Fogerty has certainly been an influence on and an inspiration to Springsteen, who inducted Creedence Clearwater Revival into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame with a passionate speech in 1993. Over the years Bruce has performed several John Fogerty compositions, and Fogerty recently returned the favor when he performed "The Promised Land" at one of his own shows. Interviewed during the Vote for Change tour rehearsals, Springsteen said of Fogerty, "He was the Hank Williams of my generation. He wrote with the same kind of simplicity and directness, and that music has gone straight into American folklore. That stuff is going to be around as long as people are singing."

In the wake of the Vote for Change tour, conventional wisdom would suggest that Bruce Springsteen and George W. Bush don't agree about many things; but recent press reports indicate that the president's iPod contains John Fogerty's "Centerfield," so W. and the Boss share some common musical ground. (No word on whether "Fortunate Son" was on the President's play list.)

Further recognition of John Fogerty's accomplishments as a songwriter will come on June 9, 2005, when he is inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame at their 36th annual awards ceremony in New York. Announcing the honor, they called him one of the defining songwriters of our time and said, "John Fogerty's songs are so firmly engrained in our collective consciousness they seem to have come to us from the American soil as much as from any one man."

*Backstreets* caught up with John Fogerty in between tour stops in Northern California.

**BACKSTREETS:** Of course the first question you usually get in an interview is "Hey, why did it take you so long to get the new album out?" But it really wasn't too long this time, and you've been pretty visible since the release of *Blue Moon Swamp*. How long did it actually take for you to make *Déjà Vu All Over Again*?

**JOHN FOGERTY:** Certainly it took much longer than I would have liked. And there have been gaping holes in productivity and visibility. I worked for some time on the writing of the songs, and then it took probably upwards of eight months from the actual start of tracking to get the album finalized.

When you recorded *Centerfield* in the mid 1980's you played all of the instruments yourself. I would imagine that slows down the process quite a bit.

It really depends on what point in the process you start the clock. *Centerfield* really went very quickly in the studio. With *Blue Moon Swamp* I just could not get to a satisfactory result, and I ended up working for probably five years in the studio—and I sure didn't want to do that again.

At what point did the song "Déjà Vu" come into the picture? Did you have it for a long time before the recording began?

I was at the point where most of the songs had been written, and even the basic tracks had been recorded. I had been working for probably eight or nine days in the studio and moving



DEBRA L. ROTHENBERG PHOTO

**"John did the hardest thing, which was to make something so fundamentally clear and simple, and yet bring great, great depth to it. His songs are timeless: the stuff he wrote in the '60s is totally relevant to this particular moment."**

**—Bruce Springsteen, September 2004**







pretty quickly. We were getting a basic track per day. And that really just means drums, guitar, and bass. And one day I had an afternoon off and I thought what the album needed at that point was a swamp rock type of song. So I went over to the writing shed where I put together a lot of the pre-production of this record, and I went in the door and was going to get busy and try to write a swamp rock song, although I didn't have any really specific things in mind. That was my mission. And as I closed the door the first line of "Déjà Vu" came into my mind as if someone was standing there whispering. It was pretty spooky. But I was on a mission, and I have a pretty good discipline about work, so I kind of brushed it away and put the keys on the table. But the little voice just whispered in my ear again, and that was a shock to me. I bolted straight up. It made the hair on the back of my neck stand up and I went, "Whoa. What was that?" Because the first line of "Déjà Vu" is so sad, and you don't really know what it's about when you hear someone sing, "Did you hear them talkin' 'bout it on the radio." But in that mournful setting I just had to pay attention.

So I ran over and got an acoustic guitar, which is not what I normally do. My usual procedure is to go turn on all the recording machines and get myself comfortable. It takes about fifteen minutes. But I was afraid I would lose the whole train of thought, so I grabbed the guitar and basically it just channeled through me. I really didn't feel like I was writing. I just felt like I was listening.

*This might be the silliest question of the interview, but I must ask it. When you hear that voice, does it sound like John Fogerty?*

I think it does, but without me thinking about it. But this voice was coming from somebody else. I don't usually do that. I occasionally have a title in mind. Then I sit down and I'm working on guitar riffs and all that. I'm singing vowels and consonants – making sounds that don't really relate to any words. Just making noises. And that's how I usually write. But this thing spoke to me from someplace else. And I did not have a title. I did not know when I got the guitar on that I was suddenly going to be writing a song called "Déjà Vu." I did not know what it was about until I got to the line in the first verse, "Day by day we count the dead and dying, ship the bodies home while the networks all keep score." That was the first real warning to me of what was coming through. I'm profoundly humble about this, because I think this song was actually given to me rather than me writing it.

*The way you write and record now is dramatically different from the way you recorded with Creedence Clearwater Revival. Back then you were actually putting out something like three albums a year.*

When you're 21 or 22 years old and you're in music—or in any field, for that matter—your mind is pretty focused, but also unaware of adult and worldly things. Certainly as a 22-year-old I had no concept of insurance policies, phone bills, credit cards.... that was the adult

"The Father of the Flannel Shirt" in his Creedence days.



COURTESY OF BOB FOGERTY

world, and responsibilities like that were very far from my way of thinking. Basically, music was my all-consuming passion at the age of 22, and I was working on and writing songs constantly. Probably 24 hours a day. That's just the nature of being that age and being creative.

Now that I'm a man in my 50s, there are many more things in life that interest me and draw my attention. My family moved to Nashville in 1999. We stayed there for about a year, and my wife and I found that we really missed California, so we moved back. Then in 2001 we had a baby. Kelsy is now three. And that was certainly a very happy diversion. I'm a lot better dad than I was years ago. I'm very attentive to Kelsy, and that takes me away from certain aspects of music, but in the long run it creates a much better music in me. I think the reward is worth it. It isn't that I'm any less interested in music. It's just that I have less time now that I have a fuller life. Those Creedence singles were literally coming out every eight weeks. Four singles in 1969. Four singles in 1970. And

in a period of two-and-a-half years there were six albums, so that's pretty phenomenal. I don't know that the market at large in this day and age would permit that. But I am looking forward to making albums more frequently than I have been able to in recent years.

*Would you say that you have a large backlog of unrecorded material as a result of having not recorded as frequently as you would have liked?*

Not really of finished songs, but certainly I've created a backlog of musical ideas. And that's very much the way I was in 1969.

*There's a wonderful song written for Kelsy on the new album. How did that come about?*

When Kelsy was about six months old—she was still crawling, she was not walking—one day in my writing place, I got the idea for "I Will Walk With You." It was clearly a promise from a daddy to his baby girl. And that concept was very powerful to me, and I began to cry, and every time I would think about it for the



**"THEY WEREN'T THE HIPPEST BAND IN THE WORLD... JUST THE BEST."**

**January 13, 1993**



COURTESY OF BOB FOGERTY

## SPRINGSTEEN INDUCTS CCR INTO THE ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME

**I**n 1970, suburban New Jersey was still filled with the kind of '60s spirit *Easy Rider* made us all so fond of. I'm referring to the scene where Dennis Hopper gets blown off his motorcycle by some redneck with a shotgun. A weekend outing at the time was still filled with the drama of possibly getting your ass kicked by a total stranger who disagreed with your fashion sense.

Me and my band worked on Route 35 out of Asbury Park at a club called the Pandemonium. They'd recently lowered the drinking age to 18, with the logic that if you were old enough to die, you were old enough to drink. And so it was five 50-minute sets a night, and rarely a night without a fight. The crowd was eclectic: rough kids just out of high school who hadn't been snatched up by the draft yet; truck drivers heading home south into the Jersey Pines, who weren't going to make it—not that night, at least. And a mixture of college and working girls, women with bouffant hairdos and a small but steady hippie contingent. Tough crowd to please all at once. We played behind a "U"-shaped bar that was just three feet in spittin' distance from many of the patrons who came to just drink, and stare, and hassle the band.

Into New Jersey came the music of John and Tom Fogerty, Doug Clifford and Stu Cook: Creedence Clearwater Revival. And for the three minutes and seven seconds of "Proud Mary," a very strained brotherhood would actually fill the room. It was simply a great song everybody liked, and it literally saved our asses on many occasions.

Creedence started off in the long jamming tradition of other San Francisco bands, realized it wasn't their road, quit cold and went on to great things. "Green River," "Bad Moon Rising," "Down on the Corner," "Lodi," "Fortunate Son," "Who'll Stop the Rain," "Born on the Bayou." It wasn't only great music, it was great dance music, it was great bar band music. I remember in the late '70s I'd be out in a club, and I'd watch some band struggle through one of my songs and then just kind of glide effortlessly through a Creedence Clearwater tune. Used to really piss me off.

I stand here tonight still envious of that music's power and its simplicity. And they were hits—hits filled with beauty and poetry and a sense of the darkness of events, and of history. Of an American tradition shot through with pride, fear, paranoia. And they rocked hard.

You can't talk about Creedence without talking about John Fogerty. On the fashion front, all of Seattle should bow. John was the Father of the Flannel Shirt. And as a songwriter, only few did as much in three minutes. He was Old Testament, shaggy-haired, prophet. Fatalist. Funny, too. As Clint Eastwood said, "A man's got to know his limitations." But I can say I've never met anybody who took them so seriously. He was severe; he was precise; he said what he had to say and got out of there. Lyrically spare and beautiful, he created a world of childhood memory and of men and women backed to the wall. A landscape of swamps, bayous, endless rivers, gypsy women, back porches, hound dogs chasing ghosts, devils, bad moons risin'—straight out of the blues tradition. And he turned it into a vision that was all his own. And in Doug, Stu, and Tom, he had the band that could back it up.

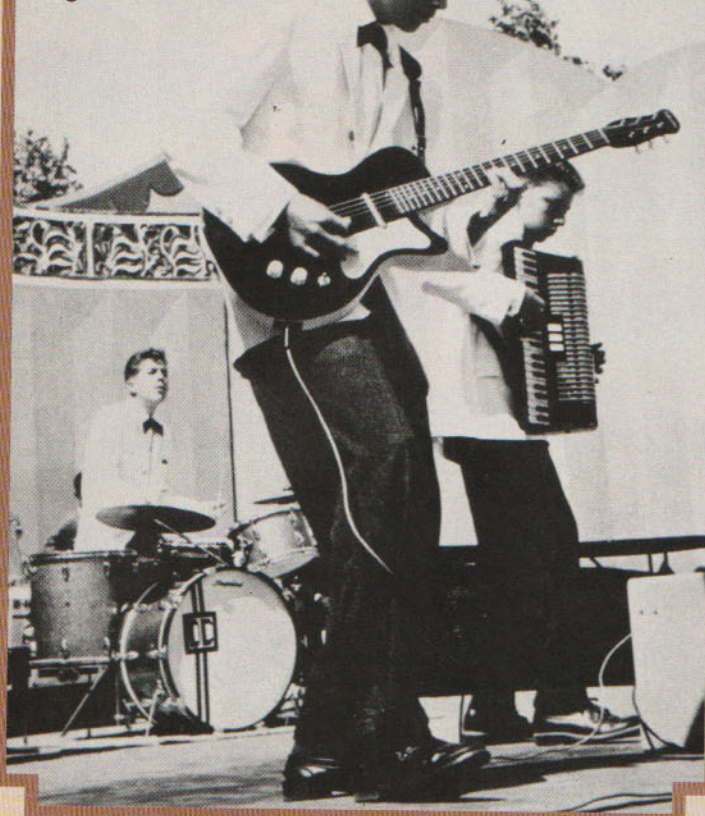
What makes a great rock band is a funny thing—it's not always the obvious things. You can't ever really know what makes a great band tick; it's not about what the players are exactly like. All I know is you had Tom Fogerty's relentless rhythm guitar, and Doug and Stu's great rhythm section, and John's songwriting and singing. All I know is they played great together.

I bumped into John one day up on Mulholland Drive, and we laughed about how far he was from the bayou and I was from the New Jersey Turnpike. Creedence made music for all the waylaid Tom Sawyers and Huck Finns. And for a world that would never again be able to take them up on their most simple and eloquent invitation, which is, if you get lost, come on home to Green River. In their day, Creedence never got the respect they deserved. Who would have thought in '69 that before the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Moby Grape, Strawberry Alarm Clock, or Electric Prunes, Creedence would be inducted into a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, if there was going to be one. They committed the sin of being too popular, when hipness was all. They played no-frills, American music for the people. In the late '60s and early '70s they weren't the hippest band in the world... just the best.

So let me finish by saying congratulations, men, to a job well done—and to all the nay-sayers: ha, ha, ha, they told you so. Doug Clifford, Stu Cook, Jeff Fogerty accepting for his dad, John Fogerty, congratulations. Glad to induct you into the Hall of Fame.



A teenaged Fogerty with his Danelectro guitar.



COURTESY OF BOB FOGERTY

next few weeks it would bring tears to my eyes. I felt that I was talking through God to her. I know that sounds maybe Southern in some way, but it was very profound and very real. So I began to try to write the song, and it just didn't flow. It wasn't one of those times when the song just came out. In fact the first demo was sort of over-the-top arena rock, much like the group Poison, or something like that. And it was just so unsuitable. So I tabled the idea for a while. And meanwhile Kelsy is getting older, and I had this wonderful idea for a song, but I just couldn't picture how it would go. Until one day I had my guitar on, which I do a lot at home, and I'm in Kelsy's room, and Julie's giving Kelsy a bath, and I look over the top of my guitar as I'm playing and I see her in the bathtub—and it just came to me how that song should be set. And there was joy in my heart at that moment, because the song had come home, you might say. And I knew I would be able to go forward and get it on this record. Because as the record was getting near finalization, I was beginning to worry that my Kelsy song wasn't going to be done in time. But, happily, it all worked out.

*And Kelsy also appears on the album.*

Yes, on the song "Radar." Basically she and her little cousins had latched onto this phrase, "chicken monk." What I've interpreted from a child's mind is that it's any little creature of undetermined origin. How she ended up being on the record was, I was mixing the album by

So we quickly set up a microphone there in Denver and had Kelsy basically just running around doing her thing. And that's what went on the record.

*On your current tour you've started playing some of the lesser-known songs from your catalog. You haven't played most of these songs since Creedence was together. On past tours you've tended to stick with the more well-known material. What brought on the change?*

It seemed like I would always fall back into a kind of comfort zone—the top 40 hits, the big hits. Certainly I did with *Premonition*, which was basically a live album mostly full of the bigger hits spanning my career. But there are also a few lost gems on there, like "Almost Saturday Night." I had been thinking about adding other tunes, but I never quite had the personal confi-

long distance. I was in Denver, and Bob Clearmountain was in Santa Monica, and we were working over computer lines. I was in a studio in Denver hearing playbacks, and I was trying to give Bob instructions over the talkback, but as I was trying to listen to the end of the song "Radar" where there's a quiet part, Kelsy was running around the studio making quite a commotion. I tolerated this for about a half an hour because I love being with her and it's a lot of fun being with her. But I was trying to work and be a dad at the same time. And suddenly the light went on and I realized that what she's doing is way more interesting than what I'm listening to on my finished track.

dence. Because my career had so many ups and downs – you know, like "He's touring, then he disappears for a long time"—so any time I would come back after ten years or something, I would think people just wanted to hear the big hits. Then, after the tour last summer, and breaking in this new band, it became very clear to me that these guys could handle anything. They're just so talented and the chemistry is just so right that it started to become clear to me that I could be very spontaneous and it would just work. I hadn't really wanted to do that in front of a paying audience before.

*Back in 1986, on your first solo tour, you made a decision not to play any of the old Creedence songs. There might actually be someone out there who doesn't know why.*

Because of the really evil events that happened to me at Fantasy Records, my heart was just basically frozen. It was just such a horrible thing to go through. Saul Zaentz, the owner of Fantasy, owned all of my songs and yet, by law, I was still required to give him more songs and more records. I couldn't go anywhere else. And also, Saul Zaentz's company had stolen my life savings. So not only did he own my life's creation, but I was also broke for many years and legally obligated to give him all of my new stuff, too. As a creative person, that can break your heart and your mind. You could end up in a lunatic asylum or an alcoholic ward or dead. I tried all of those, by the way.

*Did you feel a sense of disappointment coming back from the audiences on that '86 tour?*

Well, sure. People came to the show to see John Fogerty, and they're expecting to hear all of those songs. And instead I'm playing old Wilson Pickett hits and Stax/Volt stuff.

*Well, that aspect of it certainly wasn't disappointing. The cover songs you've recorded reveal a pretty broad musical taste. I'm sure a lot of your fans learned about some of the great blues, country and R&B artists from your recordings. What's your record collection like?*

Well, I made the leap to CD around 1990. I remember I was starting to get recordings of blues guys when they were just beginning to become available on CD. I was just outside New Orleans, on my way to Mississippi, and I stopped at a Wal-Mart and I said, "All right, by golly. I'm gonna get one of these CD things." I felt like some alien trying to enter the modern

**"We're famous for not working with anybody. We haven't even had an opening band in 30 years. But playing with John Fogerty was a truly wonderful moment for us. He was like a 16-year-old kid. You've never seen enthusiasm like this in your life—I mean, he literally made us laugh out loud every night with his pure joy and enthusiasm. He would put a smile on our faces every night. He's just such an incredible guy. And his new record is terrific."**

**—Little Steven, March 2005**



world. But I did it so I could listen to old blues records that were being reissued on CD. And over time that CD collection has grown to be rather enormous, and musically it's all over the map. But I go through blues periods where I'll listen to everybody from Albert King to Leadbelly to Son House. Usually a lot of historical stuff. Then I hear about new people, like Luther Allison. I hadn't really been up on his career, and sadly, just as he was starting to have resurgence in his career in the '90s, he passed away. He was making wonderful music at that time. He started as a young man, then disappeared for about 30 years, and then came back. And one of America's true living giants is Taj Mahal. People should avail themselves of his whole catalog. He's one of the few people I can think of that's kind of a living representative of the whole American scenario of blues.

*How were you exposed to blues as a kid?*

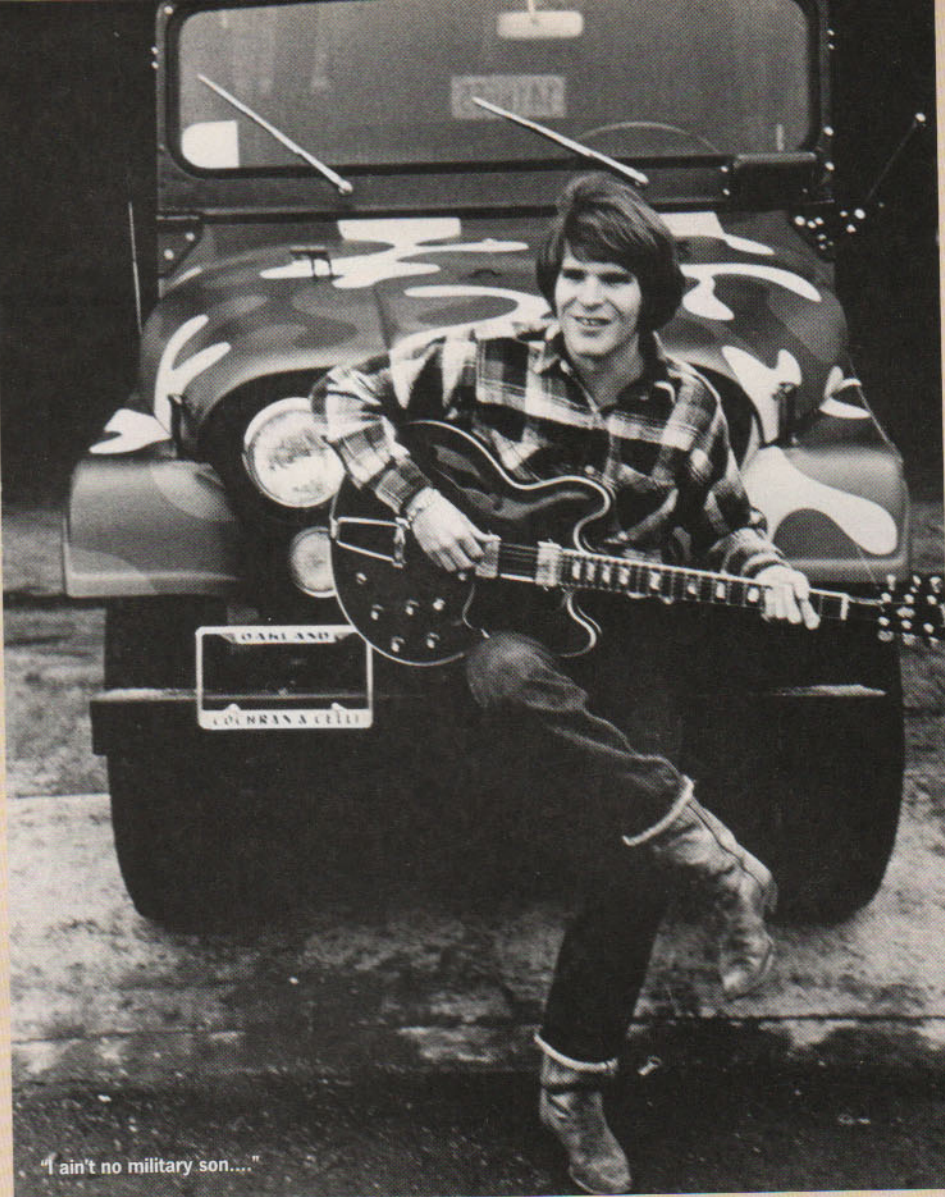
We had a wonderful R&B station in the Bay Area called KWBR, 1310. It eventually became KDIA. In the '50s—when I was seven or eight years old, up until I was a teenager—they were playing Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf. The first time I heard "Blue Moon of Kentucky" was on that station, when it was new. I had no idea who that was, this Elvis Presley person. But it was played on the R&B station from Oakland, California, which I listened to all the time. There was no rock 'n' roll station in the Bay Area at this time, because there was basically no official rock 'n' roll music. The alternative to R&B would have been Patti Page and Tony Bennett—the so-called "pop music" of the day—what you might know as the hit parade.

*What did you hear back then that made you want to be a guitar player?*

We had an old Stella guitar around the house. It was always there. It was there before I was even old enough to think about it. But seeing Elvis and then quickly after that seeing Carl Perkins really did it. I latched onto Carl because he was the writer and the singer and he played hot guitar. He became, at that time, my favorite musician. It was funny years later to meet other people, like Rick Nelson, who really thought the world of Carl Perkins. And also George Harrison. There was this little sort of inside club. And even though Elvis was the skyrocket and the world-famous person, those in the know thought Carl was the man.

*Years later you got to record a duet with Carl Perkins.*

He had been this secret, long-lost guy. He had a record out in the late '60s, it was called *On Top*—I don't think most people know about it. It was all this cool rockabilly. Carl would kind of drift off and be more country at times in his career, and I didn't always necessarily follow him there. But when he was doing rockabilly... oh my God. Nobody nailed it like he did. I had seen him on TV a few times with his blue suede shoes. He would do "Boppin' the Blues" occasionally, all the way up until the '80s. But he never did "All Mama's Children." I saw him in a club in New York one time, and I



COURTESY OF BOB FOGERTY

"Got any pine tar, Nils?" Two guitar greats meet, opening night of the Vote for Change tour.



DEBRA L. ROTHENBERG PHOTO



# CCR: Creedence Covers Rundown

Springsteen has been reaching into the John Fogerty songbook since the '60s, with a frequency and regularity second only to his Elvis Presley covers over the years. Both CCR and solo-Fogerty songs have turned up in Bruce's sets, serving as everything from club rarity to tour staple. **Glenn Radecki** runs through this jungle of hits, right up through the songs backed by Bruce and the E Street Band and fronted by the songwriter himself in 2004.

## WHOLL STOP THE RAIN



From the Creedence Clearwater Revival album *Cosmo's Factory* (1970); single reached #13

Bruce's first and best-known cover of a Fogerty-penned song had its debut performance

on December 17, 1980 at Madison Square Garden on the *River* tour, and was played at 91 of the 95 remaining shows on the tour, most notably on August 20, 1981, when it opened the show benefiting the Vietnam Veterans of America.

Played occasionally on the *Born in the U.S.A.* tour, "Who'll Stop the Rain" returned to the set on a regular basis as Bruce toured Europe in 1993. It was dedicated as "a prayer for Bosnia and Herzegovina," with "Souls of the Departed" and "Born in the U.S.A." played immediately following.

In more recent years, the song made occasional appearances on the *Reunion* and *Rising* tours mostly as a result of poor weather, but its appearances at two shows in the spring of 2003 and at a political, highly charged show at Shea Stadium in October 2003 have shown that Bruce has not forgotten the political message attached to the song.

Conspicuously absent on the *Vote for Change* tour, the only time Springsteen and Fogerty have performed the song together was on January 12, 1993 upon the occasion of Creedence Clearwater Revival's induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

## ROCKING ALL OVER THE WORLD



From the John Fogerty album *John Fogerty* (1975); single reached #27

Bruce's debut performance was April 7, 1981 in Hamburg, the first show of the European leg of the *River* tour. It would

remain a staple of the show in Europe, often as the final encore. When the tour returned to the United States in the summer, "Rocking" would make occasional appearances, including being used as the opening song a half-dozen times.

"Rocking" was used as an occasional encore song during the *Born in the U.S.A.* tour, turning up periodically in Australia, Japan, Europe, and at the final two shows of the tour at the Los Angeles Coliseum. It returned as a frequent encore song during the 1993 European tour.

## RUN THROUGH THE JUNGLE

From the CCR album *Cosmo's Factory* (1970); single reached #43

Springsteen used a slow, ethereal version of the song to open three concerts on the European leg of the *River* tour in 1981 (debut was May 29 in Rotterdam). Bruce's version is nothing like the Creedence version; not only did he reduce the song to little more than howling verses over minimal instrumentation, he reworked the meaning of the song as well.

Springsteen's choruses were changed to "Better run through this jungle" and he added three additional verses of his own creation to Fogerty's song. With lines such as "Now baby the land's on fire/It's written in blood in the sky/Man's pulling shotguns out of the trunk/City's on fire tonight" and "Baby look out your window/Can't you see the tide's turning?" Springsteen's original verses are thematically linked to ideas that he would explore in his songs in the near future. What Springsteen sang those nights in Rotterdam, Gothenburg, and Stockholm sound as if they are the early workings of "Murder Incorporated."

Unlike "Follow that Dream," and "Trapped," cover songs that also debuted on the 1981 European tour in new arrangements, "Run Through the Jungle" has not been performed by Springsteen since.

## PROUD MARY



From the CCR album *Bayou Country* (1969); single reached #21

In his speech inducing Creedence Clearwater Revival into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Bruce spoke of his experiences

playing in a tumultuous scene in suburban New Jersey, naming "Proud Mary" as a song that "saved our asses on many occasions." (Springsteen was referring to a series of shows by his band Child in early April 1969, at the club Pandemonium in Wannamassa, NJ; few other details about these shows are known.)

The first documented E Street Band-era performance of the song came on August 28, 1981 at the Los Angeles Sports Arena on the *River* tour. It would be played on occasion in New Jersey clubs in the mid eighties, when Springsteen joined John Eddie or Cats on a Smooth Surface, and it was performed by the E Street Band at the Stone Pony on August 2, 1987. Springsteen and Fogerty sang the song together three times on the *Vote for Change* tour.

## TRAVELING BAND

From the CCR album *Cosmo's Factory* (1970); single reached #2

"Traveling Band" was first included early in the *Born in the U.S.A.* tour as part of the "Detroit Medley," and it would later be used as the band introduction song after "Rosalita" was dropped from the set in October 1984. Springsteen's first stand-alone performance of the song came on August 22, 1984 at the Stone Pony (a club appearance with LaBamba and the Hubcaps).

"Traveling Band" returned as an encore song for the final stretch of the stadium leg of the *Born in the U.S.A.* tour. In Dallas on September 13, 1985 following a performance of "Stand on It," an artificial leg was thrown on stage. Saying "this man took that last song too literally... but he gets a song!" Springsteen added "Traveling Band" to the setlist, where it stuck for the rest of the tour.

Occasionally performed in clubs (and once with Tom Petty and Bob Dylan at the Forum in Los Angeles in 1990), "Traveling Band" returned for two exciting performances on the *Vote for Change* tour with Springsteen and Fogerty sharing lead vocals.

## BORN ON THE BAYOU

From the CCR album *Bayou Country* (1969); B-side of the "Proud Mary" single

Bruce's first performance was at the "All-Star Jam" at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony on January 20, 1988; he performed it with Fogerty on January 12, 1993 to celebrate the induction of CCR. More recently, Bruce turned in a spontaneous (albeit incomplete) version of the song during his surprise guest appearance with Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes on May 27, 2001 at the Stone Pony.

## FORTUNATE SON



From the CCR album *Willy and the Poorboys* (1969); single reached #14

Prior to the *Vote for Change* tour, Springsteen had played "Fortunate Son" three times (twice with the E

Street Band) in New Jersey clubs in 1987, the first of which was August 9 at the Stone Pony. An undisputed highlight of the *Vote for Change* shows, it was performed at every show on the tour.

## BAD MOON RISING

From the CCR album *Green River* (1969); single reached #2

First performed by Bruce at the surprise Halloween night 1987 performance with the E Street Band at McLoone's Rumrunner in Sea Bright, NJ. Bruce also performed a solo-acoustic version during his first live TV broadcast, at the SOS Racism Concert in Paris on June 18, 1988. The song returned with Springsteen and Fogerty trading verses in three performances on the *Vote for Change* tour.



## GREEN RIVER



From the CCR album *Green River* (1969); single reached #2

A favorite of Bruce's, it has unfortunately only been performed at the January

12, 1993 CCR Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction (with Fogerty) and at the first three annual private RCDS benefits at the Stone Pony. "Green River" was soundchecked on the Vote for Change tour, but the song only made it as far as the setlist for the October 13, 2003 show in New Jersey, where it was replaced by "Proud Mary."

## HEY TONIGHT



From the CCR Album *Pendulum* (1970); single reached #90

Bruce's only public live performance of "Hey Tonight" was on October 21, 1994

at the Playpen in Sayreville, NJ. In a surprise appearance, Bruce joined Marshall Crenshaw, John Eddie, Greg Kihn, and Elliot Murphy on stage for a five-song set. It, too, was performed at the first three RCDS benefit shows.

## CENTERFIELD

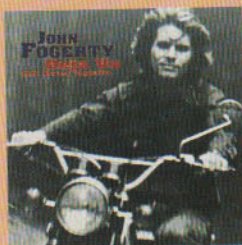


From the John Fogerty album *Centerfield* (1985); single reached #44

Fogerty, playing a baseball bat-shaped guitar and backed by the E Street Band,

performed this song, complete with the fake handclaps (triggered by Max) at each show on the Vote for Change tour (save the "finale" in Washington, DC).

## DÉJÀ VU (ALL OVER AGAIN)



From the John Fogerty album *Déjà Vu All Over Again* (2004)

Fogerty's single about the similarities between the Vietnam war and the current Iraq war was likely one

of the key factors in his being invited to join the Vote for Change tour. Fogerty performed the song each night of the tour, backed by Springsteen and the E Street Band.



John, Bruce, and Eddie, October 13, 2004.

went backstage and asked him, Hey, why don't you play "All Mama's Children?" And he said, "Oh, wow. You like that one?" I told him it had always been one of my favorites, and I always wanted to hear him do it.

So when an opportunity arose in the mid-'90s to work on a record with Carl, that was the song I wanted to do—because I just wanted to hear him do it. When we were rehearsing the song, I went out for a break, and when I came back into the room Carl was there playing his guitar, a Stratocaster. And he was playing nasty rock 'n' roll—aggressive, biting, stinging rock 'n' roll—and it shocked me. I shouldn't have been shocked, but that's what happened. I think, in my mind, I perceived Carl as kind of a country guy, but what he was playing would have fit in right in the middle of a Creedence record. It blew my mind until later, when I thought about it. This guy was really one of the first two or three of the great rock 'n' roll guitar players. But I had forgotten. And what he was doing was every bit as valid as what he had done in the first place. It's an example of taking true greatness for granted.

*You had worked with him once before that, on a session for an album called Class of '55. Carl and Roy Orbison, Jerry Lee Lewis and Johnny Cash recorded your song "Big Train (From Memphis)." That must have been exciting for you as a fan of those guys.*

Oh, totally. When I get around people like that, I'm a little kid. At that session I felt like a little kid with no credentials. I went up to each one of them and shook their hand and introduced myself. I was in awe. Absolutely in awe.

*You've often cited James Burton as a favorite guitar player of yours.*

James Burton has been an influence on me ever since the record "Suzie Q" by Dale Hawkins. I have very clear memories of the

first time I heard that record, sitting in my mom's car—I think she had a doctor's appointment or something, and I had to wait in the car for like an hour, so I was listening to the radio. "Suzie Q" came on, and it was just blowing my mind. I was literally hitting the dashboard. Playing drums, keeping the beat on the dashboard of this '50s Buick—and the dashboard was metal, not like these padded dashboards we have today with airbags. In those days when you hit the dashboard it sounded like you were hitting a tin roof, so I was making quite a racket. But I was emotionally so moved by that vibe and that sound—that hit-you-in-your-gut attitude of that record. And I didn't know who it was, of course. I didn't know anything about the musicians or anything. Then some time passed and I started to see this great guitar player with Rick Nelson on the *Ozzie and Harriet* show. Reading the liner notes to an album or something, I figured out that it was James Burton. Then probably ten years later I found out that James was also on "Suzie Q." I didn't know when I bought the record.

*I'm sure you know that there are numerous musicians out there with similar stories about hearing your records on the radio. Bruce Springsteen has always listed you as a great influence on him. And now you've just finished a tour with him. How did you get involved in the Vote for Change tour?*

Bruce reached out to me, and he wanted me to be part of his show. It was quite flattering, and I jumped at the opportunity. It really turned out to be a wonderful musical experience. And it was a great opportunity for Bruce and me to just get together and play. We had done it before in a casual, almost accidental fashion over the last ten or 12 years, but never anything really organized. This was a wonderful chance to do some rehearsing, get together a little short list of songs and perform them.







As a bandleader, how did it feel for you to join somebody else's band for a couple of weeks?

There's nothing I love better than being a band member. I remember at one of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame ceremonies they did a version of "Proud Mary," and they had Chaka Khan singing, and then Bruce came up. I think they wanted Bruce and me together to sing "Mustang Sally" or "Midnight Hour." And I immediately took the opportunity to lay back and listen to Bruce sing, and I just played guitar behind him. I love that role. There have been many times at very casual events—like at the end of hunting season in Troy, Oregon—when other folks get up and sing, and I would just sort of sit back and play rhythm guitar, maybe take a solo here and there. That's something I really love to do. It didn't work out that I could end up being the rhythm guitar player in someone else's band, but I enjoy that role very much.

Had you seen Bruce's shows in the past?

A couple of times. I remember seeing his show when I was living in Nashville. But seeing it from the inside was an insight I hadn't had. And also going through the rehearsal process



with him and then hearing the final product when you walk out on the stage and there are 20,000 people there—that was the chance of a lifetime, and any musician should jump at it. So that was the little taxi ride I found myself on for

that fleeting moment. The E Street Band is an unstoppable force of nature. And to have it come from a very intimate kind of rehearsal setting to suddenly being in what I took to calling a great big *whomp* was a remarkable metamorphosis.

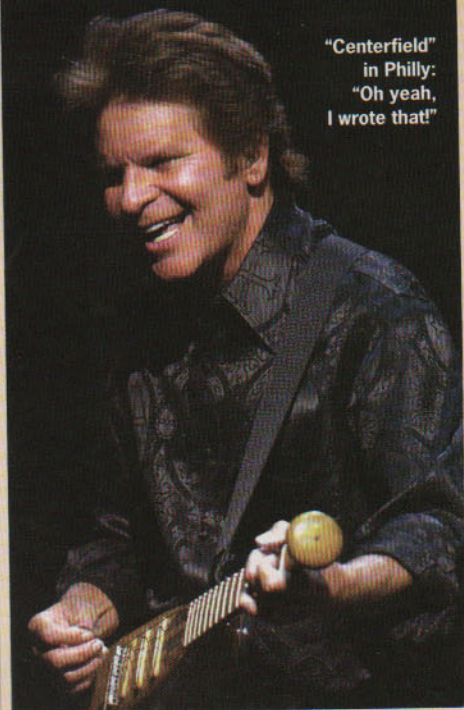
There was a bit of controversy surrounding the tour, and Bruce and some of the other artists took some heat in the media for some of their more outspoken comments. But you seemed to have found just the right tone with your introduction to "Déjà Vu" each night.

There's certainly nothing controversial about saying that war is not good for families.

I really do feel that if you get up on a soap box and start screaming at the top of your lungs—especially in very negative terms, the way many folks were doing in what we now call "Bush bashing"—I find that that's probably a turn-off. Because the sound of the voice is scary; it doesn't make people listen. And I sure didn't want to do that. Beyond that, more to the point is that the song is quiet. The song is reflective. It's mournful, because the aftermath of war is not a big wonderful celebration. It's a lot of dead children. A lot of mothers have lost their children because of war. I'm just overwhelmed by that concept. It's something I learned during the Vietnam time, because so many kids weren't coming back. I got my life, and I got to keep living: move on, have a family, go fishing, eat vanilla ice cream, and go to a ball game. And so many of those kids—people of my generation—were dead. It makes me very sad. Especially if you cannot find a good reason for why a person's life had to end. I think we all pretty much agree that the Vietnam War was senseless and ill-fated. And here we find ourselves in the same maddening and frustrating situation, where the government is asking families to give up their children. It's a sad and reflective mood, so I didn't think jumping up and down on stage and shouting about it would get people's attention. I thought that stating it in the way that I think about it—that this is about families—would be effective.

You're a baseball fan, and your song "Centerfield" has essentially been adopted as the theme song for Major League Baseball. What's it like for you to be at a ball game when it plays over the P.A. system?

It's a very complimentary feeling. Like a feather in your cap. Most of the time, I just sit there and enjoy it. Once in a while I'll think, "Oh yeah, I wrote that." I'm pretty lucky to have had that song be accepted that way. I'm a huge fan of baseball, and I'm very respectful



DEBRA L. ROTHENBERG PHOTO

of baseball, and in that sense, having it become part of the fabric is just an amazing feeling.

What kind of baseball fan were you as a kid?

The Giants moved to the Bay Area when I was quite young, and it was wonderful because I was already a baseball fan before that. The first book I can remember reading was in about the third grade—it was Lou Gehrig: *Boy of the Sandlots*. I was following the Yankees and the baseball heroes like Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb without really knowing much about the current state of affairs. We had a team in Oakland called the Oakland Oaks. Sometimes they were called the Acorns. They were a minor league team at the same time the San Francisco Seals were across the Bay. When the Giants came to town we adopted Willie Mays and Orlando Cepeda, Jimmy Davenport, and later Stu Miller.

And a little later you got another team when the A's moved to Oakland in the '60s.

It's ironic how these things happen. For years and years the Giants were up and the A's were down. Then it was the other way around. So you think, "I wonder if it could ever be that the Giants and the A's could both be in the World Series?" Well, lo and behold, 1989. It finally happened, and I went to all the games. Unfortunately in the third game, which was at Candlestick Park, we had the big earthquake.

You probably won't get to the ball park much this summer because you'll be back out on the road.

Yeah. We'll be doing some dates with John Mellencamp, which is very exciting.

Can you even think about your next album yet?

Well, I'd like to get another one out around a year-and-a-half after the last one. And my wife enthusiastically supports that idea.

We'll check back to see how it's coming along. All right. I'll get to work. ➔

## FOGERTY HITS THE ROAD SUMMER TOUR 2005

June 4	Northampton, MA
June 5	Portland, ME
June 7	Stamford, CT
June 9	New York, NY
June 11	Atlanta, GA

### with John Mellencamp

June 24	Cincinnati, OH
June 25	Noblesville, IN
June 28	St. Louis, MO
June 30	Milwaukee, WI
July 1	Tinley Park, IL
July 2	Clarkson, MI
July 4	Mount Pleasant, MI
July 5	Burgettstown, PA
July 7	Mansfield, MA
July 8	Wantagh, NY
July 10	Hartford, CT
July 12	Buffalo, NY
July 13	Scranton, PA
July 15	Camden, NJ
July 16	Holmdel, NJ
July 18	Hershey, PA
July 19	Bristow, VA
July 21	Virginia Beach, VA
July 22	Raleigh, NC
July 24	Atlanta, GA

For details and additional tour dates, visit [www.johnfogerty.com](http://www.johnfogerty.com).



After Bruce Springsteen's induction of U2 into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in March, Bono had this to say to the assembled industry crowd: "I would like to ask the music business to look at itself, to ask itself some hard questions, because there would be no U2 the way things are right now. That's a fact." He specified, "there would be no U2 after that second album," without the kind of "long-term vision" they benefited from early in their career.

The same could be said about Springsteen's own musical path. After his second album, *The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle*, he was in a precarious position. Sure, he had a great live show, a stage presence second-to-none, an evolving band that was tight as a drum, and a dedicated core of followers. The problem was that nationally, Springsteen was still largely unknown. His first two records had received critical acclaim in the rock press but had not sold well across the country. There was talk that Springsteen was not being promoted effectively or intelligently. There was the burden of the "new Dylan" crown. And as a third record loomed on the horizon, there were rumors that young Springsteen's days with CBS might be numbered.

The "long-term vision" that buoyed his career came in large part from the world of radio. In an interview with *Crawdaddy!* founder Paul Williams, in October of 1974, Bruce expressed his frustration with the record business, and the importance of radio play: "They can't stop you from being good, if you've got it. They can keep you off the radio. They can make

# Hey Mr







# Deejay!

sure it gets little airplay, or no airplay, which, really, it hurts you." Fortunately there were some key radio DJs who had been turned on by Springsteen's live shows and wanted to get Bruce the exposure they believed he had earned and deserved. And back then, they had the freedom to do it.

Springsteen needed to continue to get airplay in the radio markets around New York—which he did, thanks to WNEW DJs like Richard Neer, Vin Scelsa, and Scott Muni—and he also needed to break through to new parts of the country. DJs such as Maxanne in Boston, Kid Leo in Cleveland, Cerphe in Washington, DC, and Ed Sciaky in Philadelphia championed his cause. In recent years, Muni and Sciaky passed on to that high-wattage station in the sky during the course of our work on this feature—which is a tribute to these late greats, as well as to all the other record-spinners who can count Springsteen's long-lasting career as part of their legacy.

And as the airwaves become more and more homogenized, who is carrying that torch? Who is confronting the "hard questions" in the radio world? Enter the coolest little DJ in the U.S.A., Little Steven, who has been single-handedly leading the fight to keep rock alive on the radio. And so far he's winning. To bring it all back home, Backstreets spoke with Little Steven about his own recent plunge into the world of radio, his ever-expanding Underground Garage program and satellite channel, and the DJs who inspired him.

—Program Directors  
John J. Kelly and  
Christopher Phillips



## Ed Sciaky WMMR, Philadelphia

If you had to name the King of what some called "Boss Jocks" back in the early days, the late lamented Ed Sciaky would win hands raised in the air. The Philadelphia DJ missed Bruce's first-ever visit to the Main Point in Bryn Mawr, PA, in January of 1973, but once Sciaky got the word, he didn't miss many more. Before Sciaky's recent passing, *Backstreets* had a chance to take one last look back with him at the Bruce craze he helped create.

Springsteen's second visit to the Main Point came in the spring of 1973, with four shows on April 24 and 25, and Sciaky was there. "A photographer named Peter Cunningham came up to me that April," Sciaky recalled to *Backstreets* some 30 years later, "and he said 'you gotta see this guy live.' So I went out to see Bruce, and we actually taped a show from that series of shows and played it [on WMMR] a month later. Springsteen was phenomenal on stage, even though he really hadn't learned to move like he later did.

"Bruce kept coming back, and I kept going to see him," Sciaky continued. "It was all about the way he emoted on stage, the way he lived the songs out in such a dramatic way. And [at WMMR]

we were banging away at all of the songs—for not only the first, but later the second album. We played Bruce's songs to death. We made it seem like it was the second coming."

When *The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle* came out in November of 1973, it became clear that Sciaky's airplay of Springsteen was making a huge difference—if not exactly being imitated around the country.

"I had quickly become a crackpot of a fan," Sciaky laughed. "And it over-

sold in the Philadelphia area. And the Main Point only held 200 people, so those record sales could not have been coming from the live shows alone."

Over the course of Bruce and the band's repeated returns to Philadelphia, Sciaky and Springsteen became friendly. "I went backstage a couple of times, and I got to introduce Bruce a few times, and we really got to be good friends. We made him a star here, and it was all because we played his record on WMMR."



I had quickly become a crackpot of a fan... and it overflowed onto the air.

flowed onto the air. And my boss was like, 'Enough with the Springsteen!' Because Bruce wasn't selling any records nationwide." So they put a two-song cap on the number of Springsteen songs he could play during a shift.

But all of that airplay paid off—at least in the Philadelphia area. Thanks to this "crackpot," a wildly disproportionate number of album sales were coming from kids in Philly. "After a few months the album had sold about 125,000 albums nationally," Sciaky recalled. "But out of that, 50,000 were

Sciaky got a bit of a shock one night in 1974 when he got a call while doing an airshift. It was Bruce.

"Bruce picked up the phone by himself and did some promotions work of his own. And Bruce said, 'I just wanted to tell everyone in Philadelphia that rumors of the band breaking up are not true. We have a new drummer and a piano player, and we're rehearsing, and we'll be back on the road soon.'"

Sciaky logged his share of interviews with Bruce in those early days, though he described some of those as just





"shooting the bull," or "playing a bunch of Bruce's favorite artists and songs, without Bruce saying much."

"A couple of times the whole band came up, but they were pretty sloppy, loose interviews. They weren't used to doing radio interviews, and I was doing my best, but it was kind of like pulling teeth. You could never get Bruce to ever explain a song. He would never do that. But he would talk about touring and what was going on in the studio. He wasn't hiding anything, he just wasn't really forthcoming."

"We just liked him," Sciaky continued. "We liked his songs and the way he sang them, and we just made it into this thing that just went nuts, culminating in the Main Point broadcast on February 5, 1975, which is known as *The Saint, the Innocent, and the Main Point Shuffle*."

Interestingly, that now-famous broadcast almost never happened.

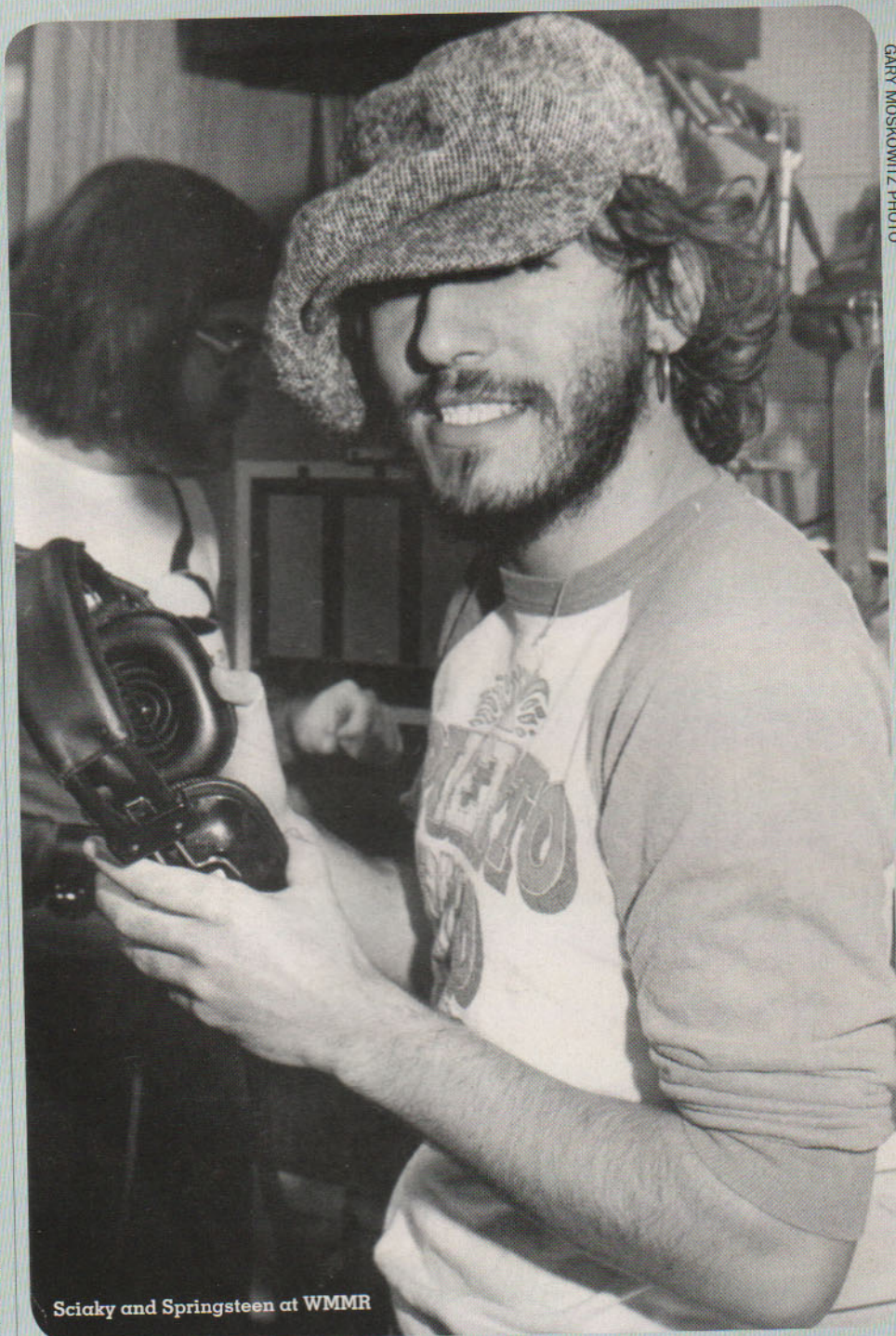
Sciaky told *Backstreets* that after a promise from Bruce and Mike Appel to do a broadcast of the 2/5/75 benefit for the Main Point, Bruce decided the day of the show that he didn't want it to air. He was playing some new songs, which would soon appear on *Born to Run*, and many of the songs were unfinished. It took some doing by Sciaky, with the DJ calling Springsteen despite Appel's objections, and trying to convince Bruce to at least do a shortened broadcast. In the end, Bruce decided to do the whole show on the radio.

"We didn't have a phone line from the Main Point, so they had to tape the show in hour-long segments and then drive them to the station and put them on the air," Sciaky explained. "And after the final reel had played, Bruce's lighting guy Marc Brickman took all of the tapes. So we never got a good copy of the show. But it was a classic show, and it's collected to this day, and I'm glad."

Did Sciaky ever feel that Bruce was in danger of being dropped?

"I think if *Born to Run* had bombed, Columbia would have dumped him. I remember one Columbia promo guy saying, 'Don't play Springsteen, play Aerosmith.' [Bruce] was signed, and then 'who cares.' Columbia was busy promoting *The Wombles*, if you can believe that. I think it was a British cartoon with real singers who had an album out at the time. They couldn't care less. To them, Bruce's first two records had bombed. They couldn't get airplay; they didn't have sales. It was two out and they bombed. And then it was 'give him one last chance with *Born to Run*, and if it fails, he's off.' Fortunately, the third record was a classic."

Later in his career, Sciaky hosted the syndicated *The King Biscuit Flower Hour*; as the era of the DJ as personality gave way to canned programming, he



Sciaky and Springsteen at WMMR

bounced around several Philadelphia stations and was even without a home on the airwaves for a few years in the late '90s. For the last two years of his life he returned to radio with his own show on WMGK, "Sundays with Springsteen."

And of course he still went to as many Bruce shows as possible. Speaking to Bruce one night in Philadelphia in 1999, he asked if Bruce had ever thought of doing "Incident," "Rosalita," and "New York City Serenade" all in a row.

Bruce replied, "No, not really, Ed."

But on 9/25/99, when he heard Bruce open the final night in Philly with "Incident on 57th Street"—played for the

first time since the River tour—Sciaky said he wept. "Tears filled my eyes because that's the one song that brings back all those early days."

After Sciaky's death in January 2004, at the age of 55, Springsteen issued this statement: "Ed Sciaky was the kind of DJ whose passion was the lifeblood for artists like myself. His support for my work brought me to an audience in Philadelphia that has remained one of my strongest to this day. Ed was the DJ as true rock 'n' roll fan... the very spirit of the music he loved. He will be greatly missed."

—John J. Kelly



## Richard Neer WNEW, New York

When Richard Neer was working the overnight shift at New York's WNEW in the early '70s, all kinds of characters would call the request line in the middle of the night. Some of the callers were hoping to hear a special song, but most of the regulars were just looking for a friendly voice. Only one of the late-night callers was a Columbia Records recording artist.

"He'd call at three in the morning," remembered Neer. "And he'd always just say, 'Hey, this is Bruce.' I'd give him the back-door hotline number when he'd call, or when I'd run into him, but he'd always manage to lose it, so he'd inevitably call on the regular request line."

Bruce Springsteen wasn't phoning to request that the DJ play a special song—or to promote his own records, which is why most musicians talk to radio stations. He was simply looking for a sympathetic ear in the middle of the night. "There was a period of time when he'd call just about every week, sometimes a couple of nights in a row," Neer said. "Sometimes I knew he was with somebody and she was sleeping, and sometimes he'd just come off playing a gig and he was too rev-ed up to sleep. He just was looking for someone to talk to who was on his wavelength musically, and into the same kind of things he was. We'd talk about women, politics, and even sports."

Sometimes the conversations would go on so long that Neer—who normally held the two a.m. to six a.m. airshift—would get off work and go into the next room to continue the phone call. "I don't think it was anything calculated on his part," Neer recalled. "I don't even think he knew how much of a fan I was."

Neer had seen Springsteen numerous times during the early '70s, catching shows at Max's Kansas City and other small clubs. Initially he was not overly impressed, but a couple of shows in 1974

changed his mind. "The shows got better and better, and seeing him live was better than any record." He met Bruce on numerous occasions backstage, but their in-person conversations never seemed to have the same intimacy as their late-night phone chats.

Soon Neer became one of the biggest boosters for Springsteen at powerful WNEW, and he became one of the first DJs in the New York market to routinely give the first two albums airplay, even

when other stations were ignoring them. WNEW was a free-form station at the time, and Neer was famous for playing the entire side two of *The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle* regularly on his show. "I was on overnight, so I could get away with it," he said. "Now you have classic rock stations doing special shows called 'The Perfect Album Side,' and that's something we used to do all the time as part of our standard programming. We had the freedom to do that, while disc jockeys today have to play whatever is on their computerized chart."

Neer documented the changes in radio in his 2001 book *FM: The Rise and Fall of Rock Radio* (Villard), citing Springsteen as an artist who benefited greatly from the age when DJs could play their favorite artists without corporate approval. He also recounts several stories about Springsteen's manager Mike Appel, whose heavy-handed promotion techniques almost permanently damaged Bruce's reputation with NEW. "He sent these postcards to every DJ that said 'What does it take to get airplay on this station?'" Appel also sent the station Xeroxes of \$100 bills, which offended the DJs by the implication of payola. Neer said the move was partic-



Neer, right, with Harry Chapin, for a World Hunger Year radiothon at WNEW.

like that. The broadcast was almost cancelled literally at the last minute."

Neer stayed close to Bruce through 1976, even attending a Yankees game

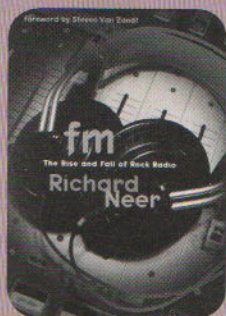


## He'd call at three in the morning: "Hey, this is Bruce."

ularly misguided considering that NEW was the only New York station regularly playing Bruce at the time. "There were rumors after that that NEW had banned the second album, but that wasn't true.

But once those cards came out, Vin Scelsa and I were the only ones playing Bruce for a while. I asked Bruce about it, because he was still calling back then, and he said he knew nothing about it."

Springsteen managed to survive Appel's overzealous representation, but tension between NEW and Bruce's manager continued into 1975 when NEW arranged



to broadcast the Bottom Line show. As Neer chronicles in his book, the broadcast was almost cancelled on several occasions, and Appel only agreed to the event if he himself was allowed to mix it. His mixing is the reason, Neer says, that the sound quality on the broadcast was compromised. "I think they intentionally screwed up the early broadcasts so they wouldn't get bootlegged. But you are cutting off your own nose to spite your face when you do something

with the Boss that year, and was one of the few to interview Bruce during those "lawsuit years." But after the late '70s, they fell out of touch and the late-night phone calls ceased. Neer's request to interview Bruce about the period for *FM* wasn't granted, though Steven Van Zandt contributed the foreword. Still, even without Bruce's recollections, Neer's book is a fascinating portrait of a time when FM radio was filled with visionary and creative DJs, and when the music really did seem to matter.

Neer left WNEW years ago when the station tightened up its format, but he's continued on strong in radio since, hosting a syndicated show and appearing on WFAN on weekends, doing pre- and post-game New York Giants' broadcasts, and hosting a national sports talk show on FOX Sports. He still holds a special place for some of the early Springsteen performances he witnessed and the late-night phone calls that helped fill up his long overnight shifts on the air. "He was just like any lonely guy who was up at three in the morning," Neer remembered, sounding a little wistful himself for those glory days. ➤

—Charles R. Cross



## Maxanne WBCN, Boston

**M**axanne Sartori worked the afternoon shift on Boston's WBCN in the early '70s. BCN was one of the first great underground FM stations in the country, and the DJs had virtually complete freedom; Maxanne gave much-needed boosts to hometown acts like the J. Giels Band, the Cars, and Aerosmith. Her introduction to Springsteen, from a pair of "suits," wasn't exactly the stuff hits are made of.

"I remember these two promotion guys from Columbia coming up to the station," she tells *Backstreets*. "I think

At one point, Maxanne asked Bruce if he wanted to say anything about Asbury Park.

"What can I say," Bruce laughed. "I've been trying to get out of there for about 20 years."

Maxanne says she was virtually the only one at WBCN throughout most of 1973 and 1974 to play Springsteen on the air. She'd get a lot of requests from kids who lived in towns along the beach in Massachusetts, especially places like Revere Beach, a Boston-area equivalent of Asbury Park.

Springsteen talked with Maxanne again in 1974, after a number of gigs in various Boston area bars and clubs like Oliver's and Joe's Place. On April 9, starting a run at Charlie's Bar in Cambridge, Bruce and the E Streeters

blocks," Clarence Clemons on sax (and cowbell for "Rosalita,") and Gary Tallent on tuba. By this time Bruce and the band had a true appreciation of Maxanne's dedication (and her important support outside the New York/New Jersey/Pennsylvania tri-state area), and he rewarded her with an extremely rare acoustic version of "Rosalita."

Bruce also displayed his usual self-deprecating sense of humor, thanking Maxanne at the end of the set: "I really do want to thank WBCN and Maxanne, because when we first came here, when we first played in Boston, we played at Oliver's to ten or 20 people... and now there must be damn near 50 people in the place!"

"The power of media is just overwhelming," joked Maxanne back to Bruce. But neither Bruce nor Maxanne could anticipate the crucial role she had played. Exactly one month later, Jon Landau would see "rock and roll future" down the road at the Harvard Square Theater.

Maxanne stayed at WBCN until 1977; she later worked at Boston's WBOS, New York's WRVR and WNEW, and stations in Seattle, WA and Monterey, CA. ➔

—John J. Kelly



**Dylan had already happened... we were looking for the 'new thing.'**

their names were Sal and Jimmy. They were always together, Sal and Jimmy. And they had these suits and they really looked out of place. And they were talking to the jocks about this 'new Dylan,' which nobody wanted to hear because Dylan had already happened a decade ago and we were looking for the 'new thing.' So nobody was really listening."

In early January 1973, just three days after the release of *Greetings From Asbury Park, NJ*, Springsteen began an extended run at a club in Boston called Paul's Mall. The shows were not well attended—Springsteen later joked on the air at WBCN that the cash register sounded as loud as any of the instruments on stage. But Maxanne was there.

"I remember it looked like there were more people onstage than there were in the crowd. But it didn't seem to matter much to Bruce and the guys. They still put enormous heart and soul into the show."

On January 10, 1973, in the middle of the string of shows, Springsteen and Mike Appel expressed a desire to visit the studios of WBCN. It was to be Springsteen's first major market radio interview.

Maxanne recalls a station policy: that if any artist came up for an interview, they also had to play. Springsteen agreed, offering a six-song set featuring the antics of Bruce and the band (minus Vini Lopez) as they ran through forthcoming album tracks "Does This Bus Stop at 82nd Street?" and "Blinded By the Light," as well as staples of their live show, "Bishop Dance" and "Song for the Orphans."

returned to the WBCN studio. The ensemble included Danny Federici on accordion, David Sancious on "sand



DUANA LEMAY PHOTO / DAVID BIEBER ARCHIVES - BOSTON







## Scott Muni WNEW, New York

There were bound to be more than a handful of disc jockeys in a radio market as big as New York City who championed Bruce Springsteen and gave him the radio airplay he needed. But as a guiding light at WNEW, there may not be anybody who knew Springsteen's music as well and was as dedicated to getting him the attention he deserved as the late Scott Muni.

Muni knew Springsteen from the days he played on the Jersey Shore and was well-established in radio to say the least—he'd been on the air for nearly 25 years—by the time Springsteen's first record was released. Muni, also known as "The Professor" thanks to his encyclopedic knowledge of rock 'n' roll, replaced Alan Freed at Akron's WAKR in the '50s. After stints at New York's WMCA, WABC, and WOR-FM, Muni began a 31-year run at WNEW in 1967, the same year the station's format changed to album-oriented rock. Serving as program director, Muni gets a good deal of credit for WNEW's long-held status as the nation's premiere rock station. In his last interview with *Backstreets*, he talked about playing Springsteen on NEW in 1973.

"When we started playing Bruce here in New York after the release of *Greetings From Asbury Park*," Muni said, "I called a friend of mine who was then Program Director at our sister station in Los Angeles. All she said was, 'Bruce Springsteen is a hype of Columbia Records, and we're not playing him on the West Coast.' And I said, 'Well, you will be, because he's gonna be a big hit.' And, of course, a year later she called me and said they were playing Bruce."

"That was a very common thing, where anything coming from the East Coast was considered a big hype, and vice-versa. And in this case, Bruce proved everyone on the West Coast wrong."

Muni said that by the time *Greetings* came out, he and Bruce were old buddies.

"I knew him when he was just scrounging around the clubs, when he was just hanging out and singing. This was long before he ever had a record contract. So we were friends before Bruce ever made the big time. And he had a huge following on the Jersey Shore. And the fact that I was from New Jersey, too, didn't hurt."

That New Jersey connection, of course, fueled airplay on WNEW. "There wasn't

anybody else who'd play it—I mean, there wasn't anybody else to play it.... I was it. And I was getting a great response, especially from listeners along the Shore, which made up a huge part of our listening audience. It always has. But Bruce's following extended all over Jersey."

As for what attracted Scott to Springsteen's music, one word summed it all up. "To me he was always just... street. He had great rapport with the audience instantly. He could walk on stage and not say a word, and everybody related to him and loved him—because he looked like the people in the crowd and acted like them. He was one of them. He was street."



## The Who stood up and said, "Hey, welcome, Bruce!"

"In this area, everything that happened after the first record is history. I mean, Bruce just exploded."

One story Muni told about Bruce's rise to fame is about introducing him to the members of The Who. "We were backstage at their concert," Muni recalls, "and, of course, The Who were superstars. We were just sitting on two chairs right behind the curtain, looking at them on stage, and Bruce was like an awestruck kid. He was really pumped. And he said, 'Will you introduce me to the group?' And I said 'Of course.'"

"I opened the door to the dressing room and walked in with Bruce, and before I could introduce him, the members of The Who stood up and said 'Hey, welcome, Bruce!' And he almost died. He didn't even know they knew who he was. It was really very funny."

In 1998, Muni left WNEW after 31 years, moving to New York classic rock station WAXQ to do a one-hour afternoon show. He suffered a stroke in early 2004, and died on Tuesday, September 29 at the age of 74. Pete Townshend paid tribute to the New York radio icon: "Scott was a great friend. Not someone I got to hang out with (except on the radio) but someone I relied on to play my music, support my manifesto and fight my corner with his bosses. My music hasn't always been easy to air, Scott always swung alongside and played it. That's because he believed in what he was doing, and those he chose to join him on his journey.... I haven't seen him for a year or two and I am shocked and saddened he is gone. But I know he will never ever be forgotten."

—John J. Kelly



Muni (2nd from right), with fellow WNEW DJs Dave Herman (2nd from left, in the BTR shirt), Vin Scelsa (3rd from left), Pete Fornatale (4th from left), and Alison Steele (3rd from right).

COURTESY OF CLEAR CHANNEL

SCOTT MUNI.COM



## Kid Leo WMMS, Cleveland

**T**he DJ who could really relate to Bruce's "street" appeal mentioned by Muni was Kid Leo. Lawrence J. Travaglini grew up on the streets of Cleveland and boxed when he was young, earning him the nickname "Kid."

"The first song that caught my heart and my attention was 'It's Hard to Be a Saint in the City,'" he told *Backstreets*, "mainly because I wasn't one, and he sang about it's hard to be one. But the second album still may be my favorite. I think it's a better *West Side Story* than Bernstein wrote."

"Bruce sang about neighborhoods that I lived in, scenarios that I grew up with. The magic of that kind of street life that was probably not as romantic once you were removed from it. But when you were there it certainly seemed that way. In those days, the streets of Cleveland were the same as the streets of Chicago, or Kansas City, or the streets of New York. There were similar scenarios in those days, more so than there are now."

Kid Leo was still growing up himself when Springsteen's first two records came out. He was playing *Greetings* at a college radio station and was soon hired at WMMS in the middle of 1973 (later becoming the station's program director). Once the second album came out, he played both albums like there was no tomorrow. But Kid Leo, who went on to work for Sony Records, has a different take on the promotional efforts put forth on behalf of Springsteen.

"I wasn't working for Sony back then, so I don't know what kind of effort there

was, but I do know that between the second and the third records there were people from Columbia who championed this man—basically, guys on the pulpit. It may not be cohesive, across the board, but it rarely is at a record company," he laughs.

Kid Leo says his own efforts to expose Springsteen to his listeners really got started "in a big way when Mike Appel sent me 'Born to Run' somewhere around November of 1974. As soon as I got that... I mean, that was rock 'n' roll personified, you know: past, present and future."

"No, Landau had the future," kids Leo.

"But that song became so special to me that I started signing off with that song. At first it was every day, and then I made it just on Fridays as a kind of theme to kick off the weekend."

"So then in February of 1975 Bruce plays Cleveland [February 18 at John Carroll University] and decides to try out some of the songs from *Born to Run*," Leo recalls. "The response was great. People were in awe when he sang 'Jungleland' and 'Backstreets.' When he played 'Born to Run,' everybody stood



from you... but I plead the fifth."

Kid Leo is humble about his significance in Springsteen's rise to fame, but he realizes that breaking him in Cleveland was important.

"I think winning over Cleveland was important because it gave him his first real rabid fan base outside of the tri-



Seeing is believing... when  
you saw him, you believed.

up and sang every single word. Bruce was kind of, ah, taken aback. He wanted to know how the crowd knew every single word, and somebody told him this guy Kid Leo. And he said, 'Who's Kid Leo?' And so I was summoned backstage, and that was the first time I met him. And Bruce said, 'Where'd you get this song?' And I said, 'I think I got it

state area. Otherwise people were like, 'Ah, he's a regional act.' But Cleveland broke a lot of regional acts in those days. It was outside of his home base, and he broke in a market that was renowned for breaking music. That was an important factor in his career."

Kid Leo has seen a lot of bands through the years, but he says he's never seen anyone like Springsteen. He says it's impossible to put into words why Springsteen was and remains so powerful onstage. But he will say this:

"Seeing is believing, and Bruce personified that. When you saw him, you believed. Immensely. It was feeling it, seeing it, it was believing it, it was being part of it. And there was nobody who could do that to you like him."

Kid Leo may be best known to collectors for his appearance in a couple of songs during a broadcast on WMMS. During a "Growin' Up" story about going to see God, Bruce meets the Kid in heaven. When Bruce asks what he's doing up there, he says he's "praying for more watts."

These days, Kid Leo is back on the air with a prime slot on Little Steven's Sirius Radio Underground Garage channel, weekdays from four to eight p.m. Eastern. 🎧

—John J. Kelly



LARRY BUSACCA PHOTO



**Cerphe**

## WHFS, Washington DC

On WHFS here in Washington, DC, in the early '70s, I had total freedom over what was played. So when I received a copy of *Greetings From Asbury Park* from Earl Rollison (the local CBS Records rep), I loved the record and started playing it heavily on my radio show. Powerful stuff—passionate, poetic and he didn't sound like anybody else. At this point, no one had heard Bruce on the radio. So when I began airing "Growin' Up," "For You," "Spirit in the Night," "It's Hard to Be a Saint in the City," "Blinded By the Light," and a bootleg copy of "The Fever," listeners fell in love with Bruce. You've got to remember, this was before corporate radio focus groups and "out-call" research determined playlists. Radio guys like Ed Sciak and myself flew by the seat of our pants with no radar or GPS, and our audience trusted us to take them along for the ride. And when we liked someone the way we admired Bruce, listeners responded.

The first time Bruce visited my show and played live in the studio, he brought some band members along. Clarence played sax, Danny on accordion and Bruce on guitar. Everything was acoustic and very loose. They played "Satin Doll," "Growin' Up," "Wild Billy's Circus Story," and "Saint in the City." It was difficult to get Bruce close to the microphone—he was more familiar with

omni-directional stage mics for singing in clubs, and not the kind we used for broadcast. I was constantly trying to get him closer to that mic during our interview because he was rather soft-spoken, actually shy. This was spring

Harolde club, a 19th-Century rowhouse converted to a restaurant/bar with a tiny stage—around 15 square feet—with no P.A. system. Can you imagine Bruce plus five bandmates playing on a stage that size? Of course, he pulled it off bril-



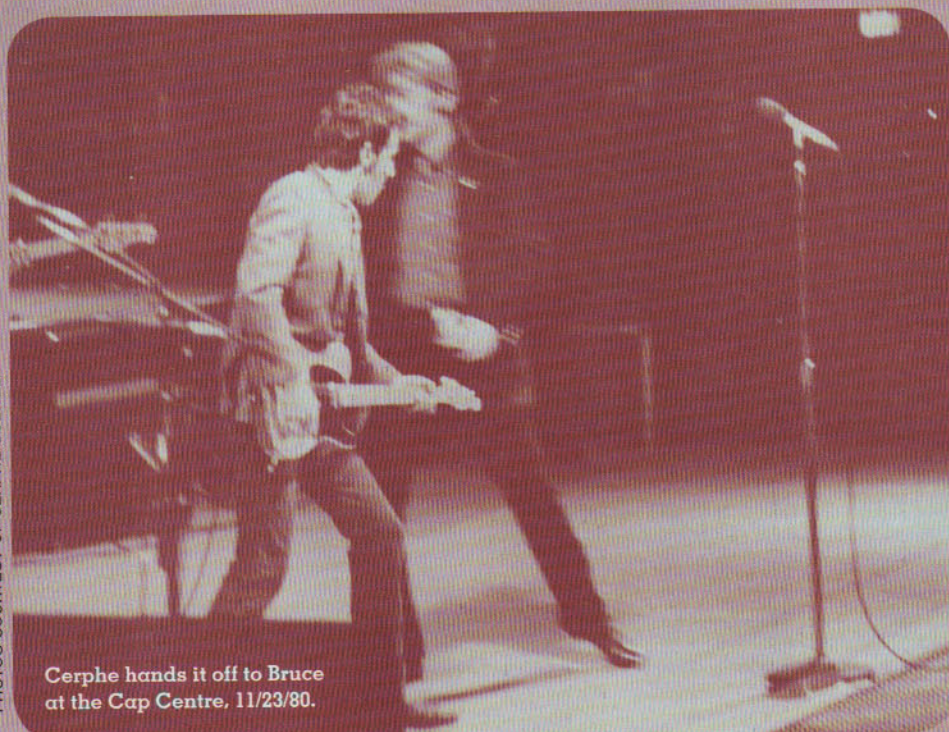
**When Bruce wants to play, he really wants to play!**

of 1973. Later in the year, he played the Kennedy Center, but it was really at The Childe Harolde that winter when things started happening for Bruce. Bill Hurd and Jack Strickland ran The Childe

liantly. The thing that impressed me was his presence on stage in this tiny club. Here was a newly signed, relatively unknown musician, yet he was able to compel the audience to listen to the stories in his quieter songs, then get them off their barstools when he started rockin'. Everyone at The Childe Harolde (around 60 of us) connected with Bruce. Even then, for me it was like seeing my brother or best friend on stage. We [at WHFS] were the only station in DC playing his music, and our audience began responding. It wasn't enough to hear his music—you had to see it too.

I've had some great Bruce moments. I was backstage before his show at Georgetown University's McDonough Arena in '74, walking down the hall toward his dressing room. I heard someone harmonizing to "Be My Baby." I walked in while Bruce was shaving and at the same time singing to the Ronettes blasting from a boombox on the floor—we had a good laugh! In the summer of '75, Bruce played three nights at Carter-Barron Amphitheatre in DC's Rock Creek Park. During one of the shows, about an hour into his performance, it began raining. This was an outdoor show, and because Carter-Barron is inside a national park, everything is controlled by the U.S. Park Police. Needless to say,

At WHFS in '77 (L-R): Southside Johnny, Ronnie Spector, Cerphe Colwell, Steven Van Zandt, Richie "LaBamba" Rosenberg."



Cerphe hands it off to Bruce at the Cap Centre, 11/23/80.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CERPHE COLWELL





Soundcheck at Georgetown University's McDonough Gym, December 5, 1975, photographed by Cerphe. L-R: Steve Van Zandt, Springsteen, Clarence Clemons, Garry Tallent.

they have rules and regulations regarding shows in the rain, and they wanted it stopped. Bruce paced around backstage, pleading for the show to go on. When Bruce wants to play, he *really* wants to play! The rain started and stopped three times. Finally, the stage was dried off and a soaked-to-the-skin audience got the performance of their life. People who were there still e-mail or call on my radio show to reminisce about that legendary rainy night in DC.

Another Bruce moment happened for me at one of his Capital Centre shows in 1980, when I emceed and brought him onstage. The first half of the show was amazing, and during the break between sets, Bruce sent a roadie out into the arena to find me. The guy walks up and says, "The Boss wants to see you backstage, right now." Talk about an "oh shit" moment. The first thing through my mind was that I had said something wrong while onstage, or maybe I had said something on the radio that day that pissed him off. Didn't know what to expect. Once I was inside his dressing room, [I saw that] Bruce was sitting on the couch, boots off, feet up on a coffee table, smiling. He just wanted to know what I thought of his first set—the songs, the order, and the pacing of the show. That long, chilling walk through the arena... for a great conversation with him about an amazing first set. What a relief!

In the summer of 1984, I was broadcasting from Bruce's show at RFK Stadium, and at the afternoon soundcheck I ran into Ted Koppel. He told me his daughter had introduced him to Bruce's music and brought him along to the concert. He said he didn't know a lot of the songs, but what he had

heard, he liked. That year in particular, everyone in DC, politicians and media, were trying to get next to Bruce. I had received a phone message at DC101 (the station I was working with at the time), that conservative pundit George Will had called me. He wanted to talk about Bruce's song "Born in the U.S.A." and about the tour. Will always seemed to totally misunderstand Bruce's message—I never returned his call.

I ran into Bruce at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony a couple of years ago, but really haven't seen much of him lately. I've done four interviews with Bruce over the years, and now, because I share his politics and because this is Washington, DC, I'd love to talk to him again on my afternoon show [now on WARW, 94.7 FM]. I keep in touch with Steven, and I've done several events with him in conjunction with his wonderful syndicated radio show. I've been pals with Nils since his Grin days and sat with him at a Capital Centre Springsteen concert before he joined the band. Like all of us, Nils was a fan, too.

I love Bruce's music now more than ever. I keep rediscovering his songs. In 2003, when I contributed to Frank Stefanko's photography book *Days of Hope and Dreams*, I fell in love all over again with the albums *Darkness on the Edge of Town* and *The River*. Bruce's songs can break your heart or heal your heart depending on where you are at the moment. For me, they still do both. I am honored that Dave Marsh included Ed Sciaky, Kid Leo and myself in his books. We were the first true believers on radio, and that's a great short list to be on. 🐾

—as told to Lisa Iannucci

## Vin Scelsa WNEW, New York

**T**hough most radio listeners know Vin Scelsa as a popular DJ on WNEW in the '70s, he's also got an alter-ego: Bayonne Butch. "I grew up in Bayonne, and then Essex County," he explains. When Southside Johnny told Scelsa he had to get a "band name," the DJ reverted to his nickname from childhood. "I even had a Jukes jacket with that stitched on it," he says. "Pretty soon, everyone at NEW had their own band name."

Scelsa began at NEW earlier in the '70s, having already established himself at such pioneering stations as WFMU, WBIA, and WABC. He joined the mighty NEW just as the station began to air Bruce Springsteen's records in late 1973. He first discovered Springsteen, as did many listeners, by hearing fellow NEW jock Richard Neer play cuts from *The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle*. Though he says he wasn't the first or the most ardent Springsteen fan at the station, his New Jersey background gave him an instant identification with Bruce's music. "The most immediate thing that grabbed me about Bruce and the E Street Band was the fact that they were from the home state," he recalled. "They were the first group from New Jersey who were part of the culture. There were lots of rockers from New Jersey before, but none of them had the street identification that Bruce had. With Bruce's songs, the actual street names were in the songs. It wasn't like Frankie Valli, who was from New Jersey but could have been from anywhere. All of Bruce's songs were set in New Jersey."

Scelsa first saw the band at the famous 1975 Bottom Line shows, which were broadcast on NEW. That initial jolt continued into what he now jokingly calls a ten-year "addiction" of trying to



DEBRA L. ROTHENBERG PHOTO



see every Springsteen show he could. "I spent a whole long period of time aching to be in the E Street Band," he says. "I would travel anywhere on the East Coast to see them. At a certain point, I realized that this was an addiction I had, and it was debilitating. It was like a drug, like cocaine, like any other drug that makes you high. The let-down after the shows became very severe, and over a period of a couple of years it became more immediate. It used to be that I'd go see a show and be flying high for a couple of days, but then I'd go see a show and I'd be sad coming out of the arena. No amount of listening to the records would change that. I realized that this was not good. So I went cold turkey on Bruce; I couldn't do it anymore."

Scelsa continued to play Springsteen albums on his shows (and NEW was one of the only radio outlets that gave 1982's *Nebraska* much airplay) but his fever for Springsteen had broken. Radio itself also changed during the '80s: Scelsa was famous for his free-form sets, but by 1984 most radio stations were programmed by consultants and not DJs. "That was really an end of an era—not just for Bruce, but also for radio," he says. "After that the consultants came in, and they wanted to maximize profits." He left NEW in 1982, but returned several years later and stayed until the end of 2000, when he left commercial radio altogether.

One of Scelsa's most emotional moments as a DJ also involved the music of Springsteen, if only circumstantially. Scelsa was on the air the night John Lennon was murdered, and when he heard the initial report, he put on "Jungleland."

"At first we had no idea of the severity or even if the report was true," Scelsa recalls. "We simply heard that a man who had been identified as John Lennon had been shot. 'Jungleland' was perfect because that song was New York City at the time. And then halfway through 'Jungleland,' we received word that Lennon had died. And I remember fad-

music fans still talk about two decades later. "That night was the crowning achievement of what radio could be for its audience," he says.

Scelsa also had the occasion of introducing Springsteen and the E Street Band at several shows over the years, including the November 1980 Madison Square Garden gigs. "It was the most

was, he did befriend Little Steven and several E Street Band members, and they have remained frequent guests on his shows ever since. He was an early proponent of Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes, a band he still calls "one of the greatest in rock 'n' roll," and one that rarely got their due. He calls *Hearts of Stone* as heartfelt, as soulful, and as moving as any rock 'n' roll album."

"Idiot's Delight," Scelsa's legendary weekly radio show, aired on both WXRK and WNEW-FM before landing at his current home in 2001 on New York's WFUV public radio. The show is a rare current example of eclectic, free-form radio, and it has proved a huge hit with both listeners and musicians. Scelsa's guests have included a virtual "who's who" of rock with notable appearances from Danny Federici, Southside Johnny, and Little Steven. "Idiot's Delight" airs on Saturday nights from 8 p.m. to midnight. Check out [www.wfuv.org](http://www.wfuv.org) for broadcast information, interview archives, and previous playlists. ➤

—Charles R. Cross



COURTESY OF VIN SCIELSA / LYNN GOLDSMITH PHOTO

**This was an addiction... like any other drug that makes you high.**

ing out and making an announcement and then having a long dead space on the air. I had nothing else ready, so I just brought 'Jungleland' back up. So 'Jungleland' was the musical backdrop to that announcement. "The poets down here don't write nothing at all, they just stand back and let it all be." Scelsa followed "Jungleland" with "Let It Be," and it was the kind of radio moment that

extraordinary physical experience I've ever had in my life," he says. "To go out there and feel the building shake when I introduced them was amazing. I could have said anything because the crowd was already screaming. It was overwhelming to experience being onstage with the E Street Band behind you."

Though Scelsa was never as close personally with Bruce as Richard Neer





# Little Steven

## A Visit to the Underground Garage

By **Robert S. Bader**

**W**hen it debuted on April 7, 2002, *Little Steven's Underground Garage* was heard on 23 stations. The show recently began its fourth year and is now heard on 133 stations in

the United States and Canada, reaching 192 radio markets, including the top ten markets in the United States. It is also broadcast in 43 countries through Voice of America Music Mix Channel and was recently made available to Armed Forces Radio affiliates overseas.

Embracing new technology as swiftly as he'd play an ancient 45 instead of a poorly remastered CD, Little Steven recently made the next move in his mission to resuscitate rock 'n' roll by starting the Underground Garage channel on Sirius Satellite Radio.

In his spare time, he records and tours with Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band and plays mobster Silvio Dante on HBO's hit series, *The Sopranos*. And he's also created another channel for Sirius called Outlaw Country. But these days he's most often found in the Underground Garage, where he took a break from his astonishing schedule to talk with *Backstreets* about radio, satellites and rock 'n' roll.



**Backstreets:** When you started *Little Steven's Underground Garage*, which deejays did you see as models for what you wanted to do on the air?

**Little Steven:** I knew I wanted it to be in the Alan Freed tradition and in the Dewey Phillips tradition—those wild men of the early AM radio. At the same time you can't be quite that innocent again, and I didn't want to be quite that level of show business. Oddly enough, I ended up using TV guys as my models. I think our show has as much to do with Ernie Kovacs and Soupy Sales as anything else.

And maybe a bit of *Hullabaloo* and *Shindig*.

Yeah. We've got the only radio show with go-go girls. It's an odd combination. I didn't really look around and say, "I want to copy this or copy that." I just

stay within the pop structure. That was the key to it. They were doing these three-minute little symphonies at that point. And we include everything that influenced that. In the end I started to define our format as being based on the Ramones, and that's still the easiest way to explain it. We play the Ramones, which of course nobody was doing; we play everyone who influenced the Ramones; and we play everyone the Ramones influenced. That's probably the simplest way of defining it.

What are the factors that make you consider some of the recordings you've been involved with, as a producer or a musician, garage rock?

There are certain Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band records that are definitely coming from the garage world. Now, we weren't exactly a typi-

cal garage band, of course, because the minute you add a second keyboard, you're in big trouble. Almost any keyboard is trouble, but once you go past a single Farfisa or a Vox Continental you're wandering out of the garage world. There is no piano in garage land. And there are certainly no synthesizers or anything like that. With the E Street Band, very early on, Bruce's vision was to include all kinds of music,

but our basic band structure is an R&B-based structure, with two keyboards like gospel music has, which only a few bands had. Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels, The Band, Procol Harum—very few bands had two keyboards. But along the way we would do garage songs. And inevitably Bruce would throw them out and not put them on the records. Now, these were all my favorite things, and they ended up on the *Tracks* collection—mostly on disc two. Occasionally one would slip through and get on a record, but not many. I guess in Bruce's mind it sounded like filler, or it just didn't sound like how he wanted the album to be represented at the time. Who knows? All I know is, every song that ended up on that record was a lost argument for me. As far as I'm concerned, it is literally the best stuff.

I have a different way of measuring things and different priorities as far as what's important to me, and there's nothing more highly evolved to me than a two-and-a-half-minute pop/rock hit single. That's it. There's nothing more important or better. A hundred *Sergeant Pepper's* don't equal "Talk Talk" by The Music Machine, or "One Track Mind" by the Knickerbockers, or "Friday on My Mind" by the Easybeats or "I Had Too Much to Dream Last Night" by The Electric Prunes. In my mind, these are the highest pop evolutions of what we do.

You often take time on your show to acknowledge the DJs you've been influenced by. We've recently lost Scott Muni. Being from the northeast I would imagine you got to hear him a lot as a kid.

## Every song that ended up on *Tracks* disc two was a lost argument for me.

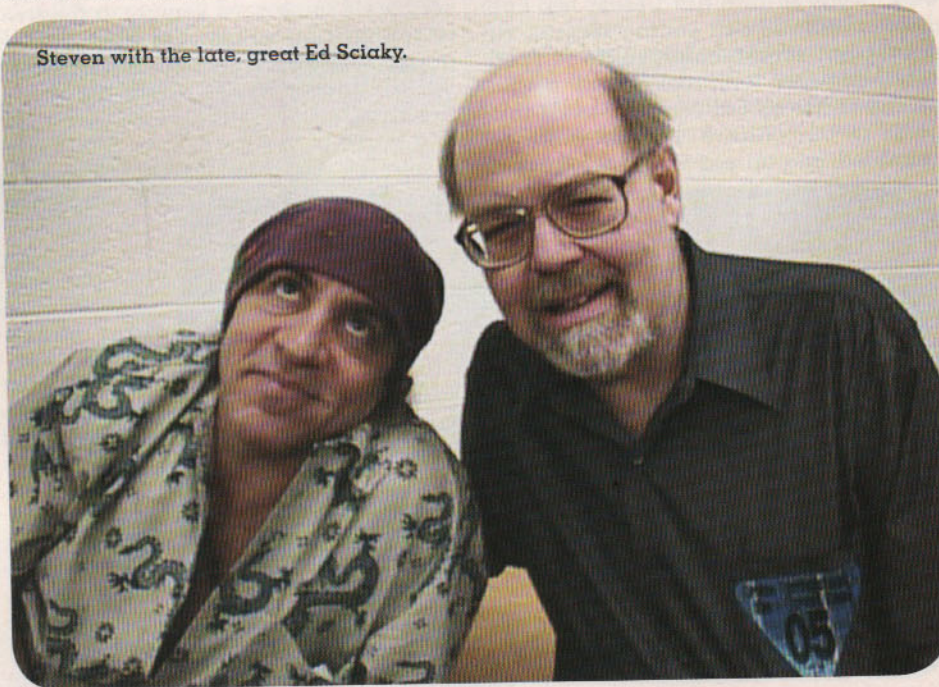
sort of put together everything I liked, and whatever came out came out. It took a while—maybe 8 or 10 shows, once we were on the air—to really get it. And that was after a year of experimenting and inventing the format.

Since you've mentioned inventing the format, let's try to nail down Little Steven's definition of garage rock. Traditionally garage rock was thought of as "Louie Louie" and The Electric Prunes. Now garage rock is defined as whatever Little Steven plays on his show. You've become the arbiter of garage. So how do you make the distinction?

We try to have a bit of logic engaged here, but in the end it's very much a personal thing. I'm always making the rules, then breaking them. It is "Louie Louie" and The Electric Prunes. And all of those '60s one-hit type of bands. We try to do what we call the classic garage bands, which became defined by Lenny Kaye's compilation *Nuggets* in 1972 and then grew when Rhino re-released and expanded *Nuggets*. That's pretty much the essence of it, those one-hit wonder type of things. These remarkable, regional—mostly local—records that somehow managed to become national hits, that had this new rock consciousness and sensibility that came in 1966.

1966 is known as the Ultimate Garage Year. Bands were getting more progressive and interesting and managing to

Steven with the late, great Ed Sciahy.





Scott Muni was a big part of my radio youth. When I was growing up it was strictly AM radio. And AM radio was great. It wasn't like radio life began with FM—it wasn't that way at all. Muni was important. His old AM radio style wouldn't have been hip in the '70s, but in the late '50s and early '60s it was terrific. And all that great early rock stuff was crossing over into the pop world. The best music being made was hit records, and that'll never happen again, of course. That was a wonderful time to grow up, and Scott Muni was a part of that. And then he played an extraordinarily important role in the earliest progressive format on WOR-FM in New York. Most people credit Tom Donohue and KSAN with being the first progressive radio format, and that's fine because Tom Donohue transformed it and popularized it, so he deserves credit. But the first progressive radio in the country was Scott Muni and Murray the K and maybe Rosko trying to experiment on WINS. It didn't last very long, and it was maybe a year or so before the WNEW revolution would take place.

**When you were first out touring, it was still a time when radio could really break a band. That seems to have gone away in recent years. How important was that at the time?**

It was extremely important. Guys like Ed Sciaky in Philadelphia and Kid Leo in Cleveland and the guys at WBCN [in Boston], the Scott Munis and the Richard Neers, Dan Neers, Vin Scelsas and so many guys around the country were totally engaged in breaking bands. That was one of the things radio did best. And to some extent it's still valuable for that, but in a much more limited way. If you're into hard rock, hip-hop or pop, radio is still selling records. At some point, unfortunately radio stopped being engaged with rock 'n' roll, as did all the major record companies. At this point in our culture, somehow we've stumbled into an era where we have a

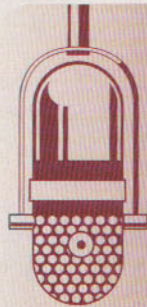
format for everything except rock 'n' roll. I don't know how it happened or why it happened. We can talk about that all day long. But it happened.

**How do you address that problem on your show?**

We're trying to bring back that connection between radio and records. We very much encourage our audience to buy the new records we play. We've played 90 new bands in three years, and we emphasize their records, and we tell people how to get them. It's very important. I tell all of my affiliates that they have to consider playing new rock

history. And that's not saying that I'm better than Alan Freed or Murray the K or any of those guys. I don't even pretend to be qualified to shine their shoes. These guys had courage that I'll never know. But I have the benefit at this stage of the game of being able to use everything that's come before to create this thing that I think is the best thing ever, and it includes all of the coolest songs ever done. There's never been a radio station that's had all of the generations of rock 'n' roll being played at the same place at the same time.

My show is really a mixture of two things. It's that AM pop conscious-



**The minute you add a second keyboard, you're in big trouble... There is no piano in garage land.**

'n' roll records. It's vital. Rock 'n' roll is a living breathing animal. It needs to be fed.

**You've recently launched a channel with Sirius Satellite Radio. How does satellite radio—and your Underground Garage channel, in particular—fit into the picture with regard to getting rock 'n' roll back into the public consciousness and helping to sell rock 'n' roll records?**

Let's be realistic. Satellite will not be a factor in selling records until they have another three or four million subscribers. I think once you get to the five to ten million subscriber area you're going to start to become significant. But we'll have to see where the satellite thing is going. There's been a bit of a bump in the road there. We'll have to see if it becomes an earthquake or a pothole.

I'm waiting for the second phase to kick in. The first phase is content. They have that. The second phase is marketing. They have to let people know that we've created one of the greatest rock 'n' roll stations in

ness that ruled when rock 'n' roll was dance music, and a little bit of the FM thing which coincided with rock 'n' roll becoming the Art Form of Rock. The Underground Garage channel on Sirius is basically an all-day version of the Underground Garage without me and with other very cool DJs that we have chosen. And satellite is the only place where a format like this can exist—because it's so new that they have nothing to lose.

**You've said that the songs played on your show are personal choices. That's great, since it's your show. How is the Underground Garage channel on Sirius programmed?**

We have a play book. There's no such thing as freeform, and there really never has been. That's a little myth of radio. There's never been such a thing as real, true freeform. There's always been some kind of identity. And we have an identity that's pretty broad. Something like 2,100 or 2,200 songs. That's the basis of our format, but I give all of my DJs freedom to play whatever they want to and to submit whatever they want for me to add to the play list. I'm constantly adding suggestions by the DJs to the play list. You can only know so much. No one person can possibly know every cool song, and frankly, I don't want to miss any. I want every cool song ever made on our play list, so I'm constantly getting input on that.

**One of the major differences between broadcast radio and satellite is that satellite is national. Broadcast radio**



Upstairs at the Bada Bing with Cerphe Colwell.

COURTESY OF CERPHE COLWELL



always had that local identity. When you were touring in the early part of your career, you got to meet many of the legendary local DJs at the height of the progressive FM format. Who were some of the significant ones for you?

Certainly Rodney Bingenheimer is one of the most famous, and he's still on in L.A. He's one of the legendary guys. Obviously Tom Donohue in San Francisco, and Jim Ladd in L.A.—who actually has the only show in the country that I know of where he can play what he wants to. There's not very many left. Touring around in those days you'd get to know whoever was on. It was much more open, much friendlier, and much more local. We'd just walk into the radio station and be on all night sometimes, talking to DJs and sometimes DJ-ing over the phone. In those days it was a little less formal, a little less like a business.

**Back in those days, did you ever think of becoming a DJ?**

No. I never really thought about that. But I remember enjoying it even then. I would make requests and request entire sets. There was something about the radio that I always loved. There's something magical about it. The nature of the medium itself has an element of mystery to it, which I really like. So I'm not entirely shocked that I ended up a DJ, but I never really thought about it. But I never thought about being an actor either.

**Your name has become synonymous with garage rock. Maybe your fame in other areas has brought new recognition to the music.**

That's good, but I try to give credit to the people who did defend it and create it, even thought it was created

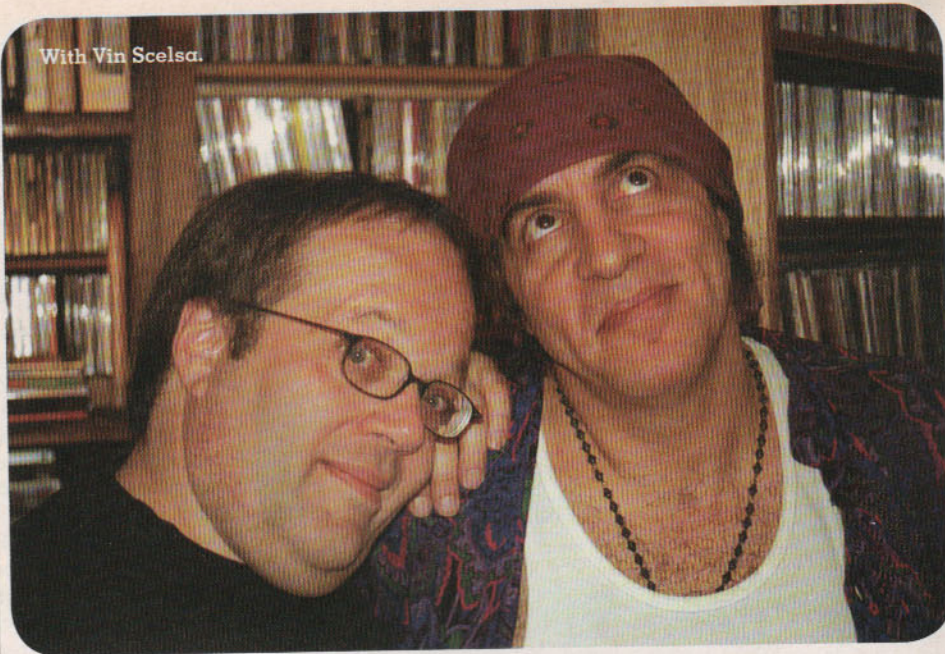
and the E Street Band, then you had Michael Jackson, then you had Prince. All these humongous things—the Billy Joel juggernaut, five or six or seven of these huge-selling behemoths. And these little semi-retro garage bands like the Chesterfield Kings, the Vipers, the Fuzztones, and the Lyres—they were just completely ignored. So my existence is a tribute to them. And it's my way of saying "It ain't over 'til it's over." These guys were on to something extremely valuable and important by keeping the tradition of rock 'n' roll alive. At the time none of us knew that it was about to become extinct, so this was taken for granted. Now we realize how valuable it is. I woke up five years ago and realized it was gone. We joked about rock 'n' roll being dead for years and years. Well, it died. It was dead. It wasn't on

in a totally natural way. Now there's no such thing as a rock 'n' roll record in the Top 40 anywhere. You might sneak a ballad in now and then. Somehow that crazy Nirvana song crossed over—but that's about 15 years ago. That was an odd moment. I don't think there's been a song in the Top 40 that would be considered rock since. That's a minor problem compared to the fact that there's not one single radio station in America that could play the Rolling Stones were they to come out today, that could play the Beatles were they to come out today. The Who, The Kinks, The Animals—there's not one single radio station in America that could play those bands. Maybe some college station or something like that, but there's no format that would play the Rolling Stones. If that isn't horrifying, I don't know what is. That's what I was looking at. I decided that I couldn't accept that. We have a generation or two of kids who have never heard real rock 'n' roll. They wouldn't even know where to find it.

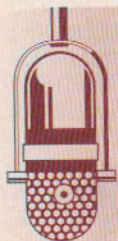
**Little Steven's Underground Garage** is now in its fourth year. You're a pretty busy guy with a lot of other things going on. Will you keep doing the show?

I will continue to do the show in spite of the fact that we've never broken even. We continue to lose money. But I thank God for the sponsors. And I don't know why there aren't more. We're in 200 markets, and we have very close to a million listeners every week. It's the most successful music show in 20 years. I don't know why the sponsors aren't lining up around the block, quite honestly, but they haven't been. But I'm going to keep going until I run out of money. That's what I choose to do with my money, as foolish as that may be. 🐸

With Vin Scelsa.



BILL KOLLAR PHOTO



**We joked about rock 'n' roll being dead for years and years. Well, it died.**

accidentally, as I said, by Lenny Kaye. But it was Greg Shaw who named it and signed it and released it on his label Bomp and really was engaged with it from the late '70s on. So I really make it a point to give Lenny Kaye credit and Greg Shaw credit. People like that were really underground at the time of the first wave of the contemporary garage movement in the early '80s. It was completely ignored by the industry because of the hair bands' popularity at the time. Then you had Bruce Springsteen

any radio station in America, and there wasn't one single record company in America who had signed a rock 'n' roll band. Who would have imagined that day coming?

**When you were a kid listening to AM radio, the Top 40 was basically filled with the records you still play on your show. Can rock 'n' roll regain that sort of popularity?**

That's an example of the era when rock 'n' roll and pop were crossing over



# ON COLLECT ING

By Fred Mills

## Walk Like the Heroes

(Anubis 2CDR)  
VENUE: Michigan Palace  
CITY: Detroit, MI  
DATE: October 4, 1975  
SOUND QUALITY: 7  
PERFORMANCE: 9  
PACKAGING: 9

The Anubis label's specialty is cleaning up older, classic shows, and indeed, the *Born to Run* show at hand was a particularly "classic" moment: it took place just few weeks prior to the October 27, 1975, issue of *Time* magazine for which Bruce was anointed "Rock's New Sensation" in a lengthy cover feature. The soundboard recording has always been a favorite among collectors (it features a rare rendition of "Ain't Too Proud to Beg") and it previously appeared under the name *First Night in Detroit* on the Midnight Beat label in 1995.

According to the booklet accompanying Anubis' new edition, the show was "completely remastered starting from a low generation tape." Yes, but did it ultimately come from a different source tape than *Midnight Beat's*? While the Anubis remaster has yielded a sharper/hotter sound, both the new and the old versions contain the same fade-out at the end of "Rosalita," so it's probably the same tape, just a lower generation.

Reports are that initial pressings contained a severe tape speed flaw (the second half of the concert had slowed-down sound). Anubis subsequently went back and corrected the problem and reissued the discs; while one can still detect some spots where the sound does seem to drag a bit momentarily (particularly when Bruce is speaking), overall, it's quite listenable. Flawed, but with better sound overall than *First Night in Detroit*.

Not Anubis' finest effort to date, but hardly a throwaway, either. It also sports sharp graph-

Backstreets does not endorse the illegal sale of bootleg recordings, nor can we advise as to their legality or how they may be obtained.

ics and an extra eight-page booklet—a miniature reproduction of the aforementioned *Time* magazine cover and feature story. Nice touch.



## Cleveland Night: Vote for Change

(Crystal Cat 2CD)  
VENUE: Gund Arena  
CITY: Cleveland, OH  
DATE: October 2, 2004  
SOUND QUALITY: 9  
PERFORMANCE: 8  
PACKAGING: 10

When Crystal Cat simultaneously dropped this and two other Vote for Change tour titles (St. Paul, MN 10/5 and East Rutherford, NJ 10/13—see below) even the staunchest of Bruce heads scratched their heads and wondered, "Why?" All matters of performance, sound and packaging aside, these releases are, at best, mere souvenirs, like a concert tee, program or coffee mug. I stand to be proven wrong, but given the fact the "VFC" shows featured shorter sets with only minor setlist variations it is unlikely that fans will ever covet these titles—regardless of the undeniable historical significance of the shows themselves—the way they do, say, a *Darkness* tour FM broadcast, or even a well-done ALD recording from the reunion tour. (By way of an analogue: at the risk of offending attendees of the annual holiday shows in Asbury Park—or, for that matter, the multi-artist concert held at the Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank on January 31, 1998, documented by Crystal Cat as *Red Bank Night*—I think it's worth pointing out that collectors rarely get too excited over bootlegs from those shows after the initial excitement has subsided.)

What Crystal Cat should have done was release the single best-sounding VFC show with a bonus disc (or two) containing

all the one-offs and guest spots featuring Bruce or the E Streeters that occurred during the tour. Instead, we have the overkill here of three separate titles, only one of which has above-average sound.

Those observations out of the way, perhaps it's best to simply take each title purely for what it offers, consumer guide-style. If you've got *Backstreets* #81, you can check the actual stats and performance descriptions there. *Cleveland Night* features all the tunes featuring Bruce, including those he guested on during R.E.M.'s set, "Bad Day" and "Man on the Moon." For bonus tracks, CC included the surprise version of "Lost in the Flood" from Philly on October 1 plus a four-song selection from Detroit on October 3: "The Ties That Bind," "Darkness," "Johnny 99" and the "People Have the Power" finale featuring the Dixie Chicks. Sound is quite good for the main program, probably the best of all three "VFC" releases; the bonus material all sounds a bit distant/boomy, however.

The artwork is up to CC's usual high standards, and the 8-page booklet even features excerpts from the Bruce interview published in *Backstreets* #80. In this instance, considering the context (and the fact that the interview is appropriately credited), we'll take that as complimentary and not theft.



## St. Paul Night: Vote for Change

(Crystal Cat 2CD)  
VENUE: Xcel Energy Center  
CITY: St. Paul, MN  
DATE: October 5, 2004  
SOUND QUALITY: 8  
PERFORMANCE: 8  
PACKAGING: 8

There's a significant drop in sound quality for *St. Paul Night* compared to *Cleveland Night*. It's a clean recording, but somewhat

distant, and there's a fair amount of distracting crowd noise during the softer tunes (e.g., "The River"). The show is noteworthy, of course, for the guest appearance by Neil Young on "Souls of the Departed," "All Along the Watchtower" (Young taking lead vocal, natch) and, later in the show, "Rockin' in the Free World." So it's certainly a must-own for Young completists, and his inclusion in the set makes the concert run longer than the other Vot for Change shows. The same two Bruce/R.E.M. songs as on *Cleveland Night* are present; ditto for the mid-set John Fogerty spot. One bonus track is appended to disc two: "Prove It All Night," from Orlando, FL on October 8.

In terms of packaging, *St. Paul Night* is also a slight step backward, the 8-page booklet containing no text, just photos, most of them from Young's segment—and several of them slightly out of focus! This is probably the least essential release of the three.



## Meadowlands Night: Vote for Change

(Crystal Cat 2CD)  
VENUE: Continental Airlines Arena  
CITY: East Rutherford, NJ  
DATE: October 13, 2004  
SOUND QUALITY: 7  
PERFORMANCE: 9  
PACKAGING: 10

It's unfortunate that the most interesting of the three VFC Crystal Cat titles has the worst sound. It's not substandard, just average (for a latter-day audience recording), with typical cavernous-venue flaws (distant, boomy low end, crowd noise)—hardly a recording you'll want to return to time after time.

What the VFC tour-closer does offer: extended Fogerty guest spots (the first one is the same as *Cleveland Night* and *St. Paul Night*, while the encore features has "Proud Mary," "Bad Moon Rising" and "Travelin' Band");



Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder dueting with Bruce on "No Surrender" and "Darkness" and also performing PJ's "Better Man"); and Jackson Browne coming out for a note-perfect and genuinely heartfelt "Racing in the Street." Browne is also included in the extras: from earlier in the show is his "Running on Empty," with Bruce guesting.

The other bonus tracks are "My Hometown," with Tracy Chapman (Orlando, FL 10/8) plus the acoustic versions of "The Promised Land" and "No Surrender" that Bruce performed on October 28 in Columbus, OH, at the "Fresh Start for America" Kerry rally. At that appearance Bruce also gave a brief but smartly woven monologue of how America needs a guitar player in the White House. Amen—and now, more than ever.

Solid artwork and design for *Meadowlands Night*, too. The booklet features terrific photos of Bruce and all the guests, plus assorted reprints of the VFC press coverage.



#### **Milano Night 1985**

(Crystal Cat 3CD)

VENUE: San Siro Stadium

CITY: Milano, Italy

DATE: June 21, 1985

SOUND QUALITY: 9

PERFORMANCE: 10

PACKAGING: 10

In 1990 the Stonehenge label issued this *Born in the U.S.A.* stadium show as *Fantastico Bruce*. As it was taken from a far better audience recording than the one earlier title (*Hi Bruce!*, on Eagle), it received generally high ratings from both the *Wanted* guide (8.5 out of 10) and this magazine's own *You Better Not Touch* book (4 out of 5 stars). It didn't hurt that it was a killer performance, of course: *YBNT* called it "one of the best shows on the '85 tour [and] one of the better setlists on the European '85 tour, too, on the strength of the only stadium performance of 'Backstreets.'" Just the same, it was a rather

noisy audience recording (Italian crowds are no shrinking violets) that had its occasional annoying moments, such as the crowd singing along in the vicinity of the taper during "The River." It also had some well-intentioned but poor-sounding bonus tracks that should have been left off.

Now arrives *Crystal Cat* with what is unquestionably a major upgrade—and not a remastered edition, either, but a new source tape that's hotter, cleaner, and significantly improved in the crowd noise department, too. The taper obviously had a better position relative to the P.A. stacks, resulting in super-clear vocals, a fairly broad instrumental range (midrange is more prominent than bass, however) and, in general, a crisper, more dynamic vibe.

Should you replace your copy of *Fantastico Bruce*? Without a doubt. Just one listen to the utterly sensual reading of "Backstreets" or the electrifying "Prove It All Night" will convince you the choice was a good one. No bonus tracks, just the three-hour show in its entirety.

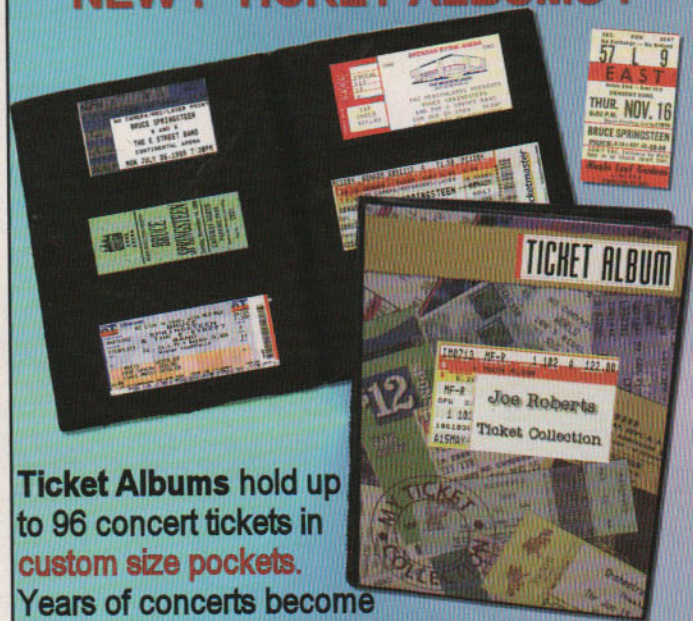
But should you replace your copy of *Fantastico Bruce* with this particular new title?

Shortly after getting the *Crystal Cat* set, word arrived of the Godfather label's own forthcoming version of the show, titled *A Love Affair* and touted by some collectors as such a good audience recording that it borders on soundboard quality.

We'll have to wait until next issue to determine whether or not the *Crystal Cat* and Godfather titles are one and the same (feel free to write in with your own opinions). Although it must be said that there's no way anyone could mistake *Milano Night 1985* for a line recording: as fantastico as it sounds, the between-song crowd noise instantly betrays the tape's audience origins.

Still, in general you can trust your car to the label that wears the, er, cat. Per tradition, CC bats it out of the park with the packaging, too, with a pair of double-sided tray panels and a 16-page booklet containing tour-specific photos, the complete *Born in the U.S.A.* tour itinerary, and reproductions of various press clippings and memorabilia from the tour. 🐾

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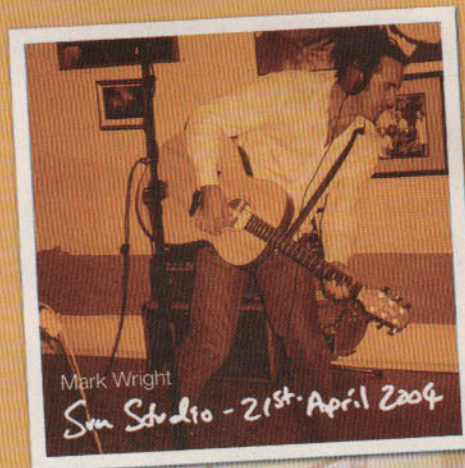
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**T**wo of the most intense, soul-baring, and personal shows Bruce Springsteen has ever played were not part of a tour, nor where they in support of a new album. They were the two benefit concerts at which he joined Jackson Browne and Bonnie Raitt in November 1990 to raise money for the Christic Institute, a government watchdog organization.

To say Bruce was at a crossroads would be an understatement; he hadn't released a new album in three years, he hadn't played an announced concert in two years, and it had been a year since he had told the E Street Band he wouldn't be using their services on his next project. He had also moved from New Jersey to Los Angeles and become a father. As he nervously took the stage that first night, he told the audience, "I haven't done this in a while, so if you're moved to clap along, please don't. It will mess me up." That shakiness and vulnerability became an integral part of both shows, with his voice aching with emotion on many songs over the course of the two nights.

Excellent audience recordings of both shows surfaced, with the CD *Springsteen, Raitt, and Browne*, from the first night, being the most common, although a few introductory stories were edited out for space purposes. *Christic Nights*, a fan-release, put both shows, unedited, together over three discs, plus a video file containing the entire first night.

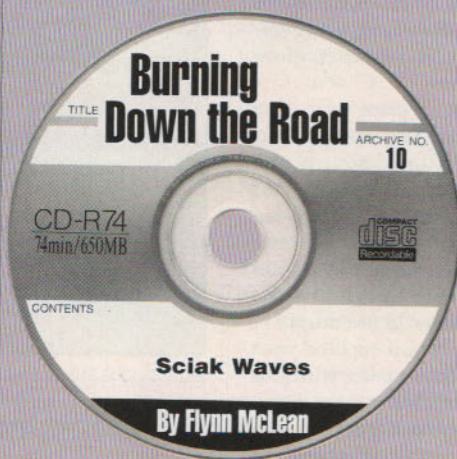
However, the Bootleg Gods have smiled upon us once again, as a soundboard recording of the second night has surfaced for the first time, more than 14 years later. The clarity is outstanding, and every vocal nuance can be heard. Just an outstanding recording that makes you think you're listening to the show for the first time all over again—and if you haven't listened to "Real World" from these shows recently, run, don't walk, to get this recording.

Unfortunately, this new recording is not perfect, as Bruce's introductory stories before "57 Channels" and "The Wish" have been cut, presumably so it could fit on one disc. If you've heard the show or were lucky enough to have been there, then you know that the songs themselves were only half the fun. Also, each song is faded out and the next track faded in—again, most likely for space reasons—and both "Tougher Than the Rest" and "Across the Borderline" fade a few seconds too early. And, for better or worse, there is very little crowd noise, so it can sound a little flat at times.

The smart bet is that someone will create a remaster that incorporates an audience recording to fill in the gaps and add in some ambience, and while that version will probably be covered in the next issue, the raw soundboard should still be on everyone's "to track down" list.

**LET'S JUMP AHEAD 14 YEARS AND LOOK** at 2004. While the major Bruce event of 2004 was the Vote for Change tour (recordings of which were mostly covered in *Backstreets* #81, with a few stragglers below), it wasn't the only event. Less than a week after the election, Bruce was back onstage for the first of several late-2004 benefit shows. And, fortunately for us, there are recordings of almost all of them.

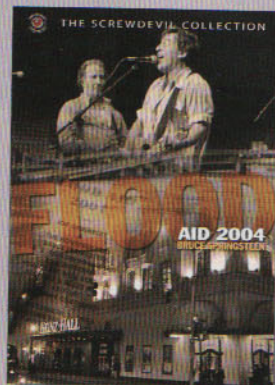
Bruce Springsteen joined Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers twice within a span of four weeks late last year for extended sets, one a "surprise" appearance, the other announced. The first, November 6 at the Stone Pony, marked Bruce's fifth consecutive year playing the Light of Day benefit, and in the same tradition, the fifth time a recording has surfaced of the performance. This year's recording is an excellent one, featuring crisp sound and very little audience noise for a club recording. The



unusual set list—including two songs from *Nebraska* plus "This Hard Land"—makes it different than some of the past appearances Bruce has made with Grushecky.

Less than four weeks later, on December 2, Bruce played the Flood Aid benefit show in Pittsburgh, PA, joining Grushecky on his home turf (and after all the benefit shows Joe has played along the Jersey Shore, Bruce was due for a visit to Western PA). This billing was announced, so tapers had some preparation time, which resulted in not just a quality audio recording but a fine DVD as well, put together by ScrewDevil and titled *Flood Aid 2004*. Shot with two cameras, the picture is very steady, and the videographers had excellent timing in terms of close-ups and full-stage shots. The DVD incorporates an excellent audio recording from "JB," which has also circulated on audio disc.

Bruce's December 19 day/night doubleheader at Harry's Roadhouse in Asbury Park, NJ, is, thus far, only partially represented in recorded form. Thanks to Travis "I Post Everything Within 12 Hours" Bickle, the early show was available for downloading the next day.



Unfortunately, despite the valiant effort to share the recording, the quality of the recording itself was less than stellar, as it was somewhat distant (yes, even in bars a recording can sound distant) and marred by some serious talkers (how some people can bust their hump to get a pair of the most sought-after Bruce tickets of the year and then proceed to talk throughout the show is simply astounding). However, a Mr. T remaster of the recording brought out a lot more warmth in the music for a significant upgrade (although you can't remaster out a conversation next to the taper).

And what's a democracy without choice? A second, entirely different recording of the Harry's early show—the "St Art" version—surfaced about three weeks after the show. This recording is a lot closer and with considerably less audience chatter, though it suffers from distortion during some of the louder segments. And the enthusiasm of the crowd is still apparent; however, this recording features a perfect-sounding version of "Bobby Jean," as there was no audience noise whatsoever during the song.

While rumors circulate of the Harry's Roadhouse late show being taped, a recording has yet to surface.

**BRUCE'S SERIES OF APPEARANCES ON** the John Kerry campaign trail have been compiled onto a single DVD release called *No Surrender: Bruce Campaigns for Kerry*. Three of the four appearances are included in their entirety (Madison, WI is the exception), and the sources used are broadcast-quality for the most part; the Columbus, OH appearance is apparently taken from the internet feed rather than a television broadcast. In addition to the performances, various segments from local and national news programs are included.

Looking back to the Vote for Change tour, yet another recording of the October 2, 2004, show from Cleveland surfaced: *The River of Change "Triple Mix"* combines two different wireless signals plus an excellent audience recording. When compared directly to the *People Have the Power* soundtrack version, the "Triple Mix" is a bit denser with more bass and not as much high-end. This new mix appears to be the source used by Crystal Cat for *Cleveland Night*; it can be argued that the feline over-processed it in places.

We can wrap up our coverage of the short-but-sweet Vote for Change tour with mention of *Two Weeks in October*, a two-disc compilation that focuses on the various guest appearances over the course of the tour. All but two tracks are culled from the Cleveland, Minneapolis, and New Jersey stops, with





highlights including Eddie Vedder's Jersey appearance, all the John Fogerty songs (except "Déjà Vu"), and the Neil Young songs from Minneapolis. Of course, Bruce's own guest spots with R.E.M., Jackson Browne, and Patti Scialfa are there as well.

AS MENTIONED IN THE LAST ISSUE, THE internet has revolutionized the way fans share recordings with each other. The days of the original taper sending out dozens of copies to friends who in turn make dozens of copies are coming to an end. Now, the taper transfers the recording to their computer's hard drive, converts the audio files to a lossless file type (such as FLAC or SHN), and then uploads them. Then other fans around the world can download, convert to the appropriate audio file (WAV or AIFF), and then burn to a disc. Or not—with iPods and other portable digital music players, fans can even skip the hard media all together.

Most of the latest and greatest recordings first see the light of day in cyberspace. But the internet isn't just helping collectors stay current, it's also facilitating the discovery and distribution of previously uncirculated tapes—in some cases simply because distribution is so easy. Recently, newly unearthed recordings from the '70s have been unceremoniously posted online for download.

A previously unheard-of recording of Bruce's March 19, 1977, show in Lewiston, ME, surfaced in early January. It's easy to tell it was taken directly from the master, as the sound is very sharp (check out them horns, baby!) and no apparent hiss. And with minimal audience noise, this one is a must-have for any fans of the 1977 tour, even if the set list was "standard" for that tour. Was it the easy internet distribution that inspired this tape's keeper to take it public after nearly 30 years? Sure seems that way.

While not an entirely new recording, the November 8, 1984, show from Tempe, AZ, recently got a whole new audience when it was uploaded to the internet. The taper converted his original masters to disc, did a little EQing, and then unleashed it unto the world with the title *Happy Rest of Your Life*. The sound quality puts it just behind the trio of *Kansas City Night*, *Oakland Night*, and *Sugarland*, as the audience is very unobtrusive. A huge fan was standing near the taper, but it's fun to hear him cheer rarer material like "Shut Out the Light," or yell out some of the lines from the "Pink Cadillac" introduction—not the stereotypical bandwagon fan of the era. And speaking of "Shut Out the Light," this show featured one of the longer *Nebraska* sets of the tour, with four songs from the acoustic album plus "Johnny Bye Bye," "Shut Out the Light," and a rare appearance of "Stolen Car" in the second set.

Another recording to "debut" in cyberspace was an excellent tape of the July 31, 1973, show from *My Father's Place* in Roslyn, NY. According to the person uploading the files, the source of this recording was WLIR's master tape—and it sounds like it. The sound qual-

ity is comparable to the bonus tracks from the *Jacksonville (& My Father's Place)* release from the mid-90s, although that source was mono, and this new version is in full stereo. And this recording blows the Follow That Dream/Great Dane version, also mono, out of the water. There are some negatives—louder portions distort slightly, and there is occasional broadcast buzz—but the overall quality of the recording more than make up for those small issues.

The Stone Pony London added Volume 14 to their *Live Collection*, and this one is a four-disc set covering the non-album tracks Bruce has performed over the years. But just about all the songs will be familiar to fans, as a number of "Tracks," B-sides, and bonus cuts from *Greatest Hits* and *Essential* are included. Of course, entirely unreleased songs also make appearances on the set, such as "Another Thin Line," "In Freehold," and "The Wind and the Rain." The tracks (mostly sourced from familiar bootleg releases) have been skillfully blended so that one song seamlessly segues into the next—not an easy task, considering the set covers Bruce's career from 1970 to 2003.

SINCE THE PASSING OF LEGENDARY Philadelphia DJ and longtime Springsteen supporter Ed Sciaky, soundboard-sourced recordings of eight shows have surfaced, all supposedly from Ed's personal collection. While all but one of these shows were already in circulation, one had to speculate these new "Sciaky reels" would be of lower generation. Indeed, a comparison to tapes previously in existence reveals sonic improvements nearly across the board.

Only the September 26, 1975, Iowa City, IA show exists in a better version elsewhere; a soundboard recording of this show first circulated in 1999 on the fan-produced *Saint in Iowa City* and was later released by the Piggham label as *Meeting Across the River*. That Piggham version, with better sound and a more complete "Jungleland," is the best to date.

The one recording that wasn't already in circulation is from October 27, 1976, Philadelphia, PA, a soundboard tape from one of Bruce's first two shows in a sports arena. (The first discs to surface from this show had "Born to Run" being the first track on the second disc rather than the last track; besides reburning with the songs in the correct order, a couple of remasters fixed that error.) As with most shows from Philly, Bruce's performance is excellent, despite his ongoing legal troubles, and the set list includes three then-unreleased songs, "Rendezvous," "The Promise," and "Something in the Night." The last of these includes a verse not known to have been played before or after this show. This show had circulated on a fan-produced CDR called *Spirit of '76*, sourced from a slightly above-average audience recording, but this new soundboard recording far surpasses that one in sound quality.

The remaining recordings from Sciaky's collection are also worth tracking down, for those who haven't heard them or those who care

to make a sonic upgrade from a previously circulating tape: November 24, 1975, London, England; December 28, 1975, Philadelphia, PA; December 30, 1975, Philadelphia, PA; December 31, 1975, Philadelphia, PA; March 2, 1973, Berkeley, CA; and August 19, 1978, Philadelphia, PA.

With the bulk of these from Sciaky's hometown, it's fun to follow some threads that ran through the Tower and Spectrum recordings, as Bruce's relationship with the Philly crowds was one bordering on personal. During the New Year's Eve 1975 show, a woman can be heard talking to Bruce during "Spirit in the Night" as he evidently sang the song from atop her table. During that same song at the Spectrum '78 show, Bruce goes into the crowd and ends up singing the song near the same woman. She gets Bruce's attention and he lets her talk directly into the microphone, reminding him of how he sang "Spirit" on her table in '75, much to Bruce's amused annoyance. And then there was the guy who Bruce pulled up, also at the New Year's Eve 1975 show, to help him count down to midnight. Bruce later spots him at the October 27, 1976, show, telling the crowd how this guy jumped on stage and went, "In 30 seconds.... ten, nine, eight!" And although Bruce exaggerated slightly in retelling the story, he seemed genuine in asking how the guy was doing. Only in the City of Brotherly Love. 🐾

## STOP PRESS: DEVILS & DUST TOUR REHEARSAL RECORDINGS

Bruce's tradition of playing rehearsal shows in Asbury Park before kicking off a tour allowed the B&B Boys (Bakerstuff and Travis Bickle) to continue their tradition of taping and posting recordings in near-record time. Bakerstuff took care of the first show on April 21, while Bickle did the honors for the April 22 matinee, and both recordings were online by the end of the weekend.

As for recording quality, both are slightly above average with clear, if slightly distant, sound. The April 21st recording is slightly marred by some digital noise, acknowledged by the taper, and some clipping during the louder segments, but is otherwise a good document of the show. The recording of the second show is a tad bit sharper, and is slightly better than the first.

The one negative that affects both recordings, and will likely affect many recordings from this tour, is that the post-song cheering is a lot louder than the music, which can make listening to the recordings a bit challenging at times (or at least requiring a quick volume reduction after each song). Fortunately, this is something that can be fixed to some extent, which means the remasters will have their work cut out for them.



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#82 - SPRING 2005

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